

# **After the Blitzkrieg: The German Army's Transition to Defeat in the East**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

**AFTER THE BLITZKRIEG: THE GERMAN ARMY'S TRANSITION TO DEFEAT IN THE EAST** by Major Bob E. Willis Jr., United States Army, 71 pages.

One of the most complex challenges facing the U.S. military today is the problem of imposing stability over the chaos that follows major combat operations. Despite the U.S. military's predilection to distill warfare into the linear, Newtonian paradigm, recent experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) suggests that the cause and effect correlation between high-velocity major combat operations and achieving a complex political endstate such as regime change is becoming less certain in the contemporary strategic environment. The transition to stability operations in a non-linear, dynamic environment is proving more difficult, and perhaps more decisive, than the major combat phase of a campaign. At some point in every war, the focus must shift from rupturing the existing system to stabilizing and legitimizing a new one; the center of gravity from the enemy's military forces to ending the chaos and violence that follow major combat operations. The aim of this study is to examine the difficulty in planning and executing these transitions from a historical perspective.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 sparked a guerilla resistance unparalleled in modern history in scale and ferocity. In the wake of the initial invasion, the German Army began its struggle to secure a territory encompassing one million square miles and sixty-five million people and to pacify a growing partisan resistance. The German endeavor to secure the occupied areas and suppress the partisan movement in the wake of Operation Barbarossa illustrates the nature of the problem of bridging the gap between rapid, decisive combat operations and "shaping" the post-major conflict environment – securing populations and infrastructure and persuading people to accept the transition from a defeated government to a new one. In this regard, the German experience on the Eastern Front following Operation Barbarossa seems to offer a number of similarities to the U.S. experience in Iraq in the aftermath of OIF. This study highlights what may be some of the enduring qualities about the nature of the transition between decisive battle and political endstate – particularly when that endstate is regime change. It elaborates on the notion of decisive battle, how the formulation of resistance movements can be explained as complex adaptive systems, the potential of indigenous security forces and the influence of doctrine, cultural appreciation and interagency cooperation on operational-level transition planning.

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## INTRODUCTION

Transitions are incredibly hard. Everyone understands that -- all the way back to all the dead Germans.

A Senior U.S. General Officer speaking on the lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom

One of the most complex challenges facing the U.S. military today is the problem of imposing stability over the chaos that follows major combat operations. In the coming decades, the nature of the strategic environment will likely place an even greater demand on the U.S. military's ability to plan and execute these transitions between major combat and stability operations.<sup>1</sup> The situation facing U.S. and Coalition military forces in Iraq at the time of this writing is one example that demonstrates the nature of this problem. Despite defeating the Iraqi Army and removing Saddam Hussein's regime in the major combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), a fierce insurgency emerged in the ensuing chaos which now poses a serious threat to the U.S. strategic objectives in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> According to one U.S. national intelligence estimate, a stable, independent government in Iraq is unlikely for the foreseeable future. A state of persistent chaos or even outright civil war is far more likely.<sup>3</sup> By any measure, the U.S. has yet to "impose the security required to facilitate the transition to, and reconstruction of a new normal"- the first step towards winning the peace.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The "Case 2 Military Problem" in the U.S. Joint Forces Command's *Stability Operations Joint Operations Concept* correctly addresses this trend. It states: "The challenges that the United States and our allies and friends face in the future in conducting stability operations involve a complex mix of global dangers, problematic nation-states, and illegal transnational organizations. Major conventional combat operations, with their associated stability operations, will remain a constant potential for the foreseeable future." U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept*, (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, 9 September 2004), 4-10.

<sup>2</sup> Landay, Jonathan and Warren Strobel, "Outlook: The Growing Insurgency Could Doom U.S. Plans for Iraq, Analysts Say," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 September 2004, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> The National Intelligence Estimate prepared for President Bush in September 2004 emphasized the danger posed by this deteriorating security situation. Douglas Jehl, "U.S. Intelligence Shows Pessimism on Iraq's Future," *New York Times*, 16 September 2004, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> The *Stability Operations Joint Operations Concept* (iii) stresses that imposing security and reconstructing a "new normal," parallel to conventional combat operations, is critical to "winning in war" and securing "desired political aims."

Related to this problem in the changing nature of warfare, the U.S. experience in OIF suggests that the cause and effect correlation between high-velocity major combat operations and the political endstate is becoming less certain in the contemporary strategic environment. Contrary to the U.S. military's predilection to distill warfare into the linear, Newtonian paradigm as postulated by Jominian theory, the transition to stability operations in a non-linear, dynamic environment is more difficult, and often more vital to the overall aim, than conventional combat operations.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult at the present juncture to evaluate the merits of this assertion vis-à-vis Iraq as OIF is still a work in progress. However, the problem of bridging the void between major combat operations and a campaign's ultimate political aims is not idiosyncratic to U.S. forces in Iraq. It is therefore useful to gain an understanding of the difficulty in planning and executing these transitions from other historical cases.

There exists a great body of study on the operational planning for the German invasion of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> The majority of historical and professional military interest in Operation Barbarossa is focused on the customary elements of operational design: the dubious endstate, the failure to commit to a center of gravity, culmination and the selection of lines of operations. By comparison, there is a dearth of analysis on the German Army's plan to transition from major combat operations to securing the occupied areas. This aspect of the German invasion was an unequivocal, yet highly instructive failure. The planning and execution of this transition in the

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<sup>5</sup> The "Newtonian paradigm" is a term borrowed from author Steven Rinaldi, a contributor to the National Defense University's *Complexity, Global Politics and National Security*. Rinaldi uses the term to describe how military theorists over the past centuries have turned to classical physics, especially Newtonian physics, as a useful paradigm to explain warfare. David Alberts and Thomas Czerwinski (eds.), *Complexity, Global Politics and National Security*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1998). No page number indicated in online version, cited from [<http://www.ndu.edu>]. Clausewitz and Jomini are two examples of theorists that applied aspects of Newtonian physics metaphorically to operational art (i.e. friction, center of gravity, mass, and momentum). Clausewitz certainly borrowed from Newtonian physics to explain centers of gravity, but he also balanced his theoretical perspective of the nature of war by correctly warning of how war was likely to escape from such artificial constraints. Jomini however was less balanced and almost exclusively considered war a problem of physics. For this reason, Jomini's theory exemplifies the notion of a linear, kinetic, predictive approach to war.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed description of the German planning effort for Operation Barbarossa, see George Blau's *The German Campaign in Russia 1940-1942 (Planning and Operations)*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1988) and David Richie's "War Plans 1941," *Strategy and Tactics*, no. 108, (1986): 42-49.

early months of the war gave rise to “one of the greatest guerilla organizations in the history of mankind.”<sup>7</sup> This guerilla organization was the Soviet partisan movement, a popular resistance that evolved throughout the war to ultimately play a major role in the German Army’s defeat on the Eastern Front.<sup>8</sup>

The focus of this monograph is on Germany’s operational planning for the transition from decisive battle to securing Operation Barbarossa’s broader aims on the Eastern Front. The first section, “Operation Barbarossa: A Linear, Kinetic Approach,” examines the development of the Barbarossa campaign plan and one of its greatest failures: the lack of a coherent concept to secure the occupied areas following major combat operations. The German High Command was so fixated on the apparition of decisive battle that it did not even conceive of the need to transition to a subsequent phase of operations following major combat operations. The following section, “Decisive Battle Founders: The Rise of the Partisan War,” examines the consequences of the campaign’s shortsighted, linear approach to stabilizing the post-Barbarossa environment.<sup>9</sup> This section also examines one case study that represented the German Army’s best attempt to stabilize the situation in the occupied areas and defeat the partisan movement in 1942. Army Group Center’s experiment with the Kaminsky Brigade suggests that the German Army could have used indigenous security forces on a broader scale to effectively secure the occupied areas at little cost in terms of German resources. In “Barbarossa in Retrospect: Planning to Fail,” the study turns to examine three interrelated dynamics that adversely affected the German operational planning process: the role of decisive battle doctrine and experiential fallacies, the planners’

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<sup>7</sup> Leonid Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941-1944*, (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1999), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Although there are conflicting schools of thought regarding the effectiveness of the Soviet partisan movement, Grenkevich makes the most persuasive case in support of the partisan’s impact on the war’s eventual outcome. He states: “Those who led, fought in and supported partisan war would contribute significantly to the ultimate defeat of the Nazi war machine.” Grenkevich, 65.

<sup>9</sup> The “initial period of war” is a commonly used chronological reference (in works such as *When Titans Clashed* and *The Soviet Partisan Movement*) to the period of war between the start of Operation Barbarossa to the beginning of the Stalingrad siege. This time period is useful because it marks the period where the German Army maintained the strategic initiative, afterwards, the initial strategic objectives for the German invasion were no longer achievable. This period is also significant to this study because it coincides with the most important evolutionary period for the partisan struggle.



faulty appreciation of Soviet society, culture and politics, and the Army's overall indifference towards "interagency" operations and political-military unity of purpose. Finally, this study concludes by relating the German experience during Barbarossa to contemporary operations. Was the German experience an anomaly unique only to the Eastern Front or have similar contributing factors cut across time and armies?

## Background

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 sparked a guerilla resistance unparalleled in modern history in scale and ferocity. Commencing with Operation Barbarossa, the German occupation of Soviet territory lasted through the end of 1944 when all but a small number of German forces were expelled from Russian soil. In the wake of the initial invasion, the German Army began its struggle to secure a territory encompassing one million square miles and sixty-five million people and to pacify a growing partisan resistance.<sup>10</sup> As the initial shock of Operation Barbarossa dissipated in late 1941, and coinciding with the Red Army's remarkable regeneration, the Soviet partisan movement began to coalesce. From the German perspective, the most enlightened senior commanders in the East began to realize that their assumptions were wrong concerning the duration of the war, the will of the Soviet people to resist the occupation and the German Army's capability to control the occupied areas.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Germany's brutal policy of terror and exploitation of the Soviet peoples ran contrary to winning the support of that segment of the population that only months before had welcomed the German Army as liberators.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of this new appreciation of reality on the Eastern Front, the German Army executed a major shift in its approach to anti-partisan and pacification operations in early 1942.

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<sup>10</sup> Eric Waldman, *German Occupation Administration and Experience in the USSR*, (Maclean, VA: Operations Research Organization, 1955), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Pronin, "Guerilla Warfare in the German Occupied Soviet Territories, 1941-1944", (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1965), 203.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

This evolution was largely a “bottom-up” development. A number of senior German field commanders, based on their own initiative and acting independently, adapted their methods of operations to effectively combat the partisans and impose stability in the military zone of operations. Despite Berlin’s political intransigence and the shortcomings of pre-war planning, the German Army made significant progress against the partisan bands and established relative stability in many areas.<sup>13</sup> In the late summer of 1942, these initiatives were studied and synthesized into a post de facto doctrine by the Armed Forces High Command, or *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW).<sup>14</sup>

The “1942 evolution” was the German Army’s most promising attempt to implement a coherent, feasible plan to solidify their gains in the occupied areas. The Army’s efforts in 1942 however proved to be too little, too late. A window of opportunity had closed and the situation was irretrievable. No additional combat forces or resources could be spared from that point on based on the resurgence of the Red Army. Over the next two years, the partisan movement grew from a disorganized opposition estimated at less than 30,000 to a force of 500,000 irregular combatants.<sup>15</sup> After the German Army’s reverses in the winter of 1942-43, the partisan movement continued to grow, siphoning manpower from the German Army, disrupting economic production in the occupied areas and destroying critical infrastructure and supplies necessary to continue the fight against the Red Army.

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<sup>13</sup> One of the more successful case studies, Second Panzer Army’s creation of the Kaminski Brigade in the Bryansk sector in 1942, is examined in detail in this study.

<sup>14</sup> Edgar Howell, in *The Soviet Partisan Movement*, states that on 18 August 1942, “OKW issued a new directive on anti-partisan warfare which, as it was carried out, represented an almost complete reversal of views held earlier as to the strategy to be used to suppress irregular activity and indicated a much clearer understanding on the part of Berlin than heretofore as to just what the movement was and how best to combat it and undermine its bases.” Edgar Howell, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941-1944*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1989), 117.

<sup>15</sup> Keith Simpson, “German Experiences of Rear Area Security on the Eastern Front,” *Royal United Services Institution Journal* (December, 1976): 44.

## Thesis

The German Army's failure to secure the occupied areas and gain the support, or at least the neutrality, of the Russian peoples in the wake of Operation Barbarossa directly contributed to Germany's overall defeat on the Eastern Front.<sup>16</sup> The Army's ultimate failure stemmed directly from the campaign plan's linear, kinetic approach to the problem: the planners assumed that once the Red Army was destroyed, the communist regime would collapse and resistance to German occupation would logically follow suit. This fallacy led the German Army across the Soviet frontier with no transition plan to secure the broader political aims following Operation Barbarossa. Had the Barbarossa planners visualized, resourced and implemented an effective transition to impose its will over the occupied territory and its peoples immediately following major combat operations, the German Army could have ensured the uninterrupted continuation of combat against the Red Army and created favorable conditions for the achievement of the short-term political and economic objectives in the occupied areas.<sup>17</sup> From a broader perspective, this particular study suggests an interesting point regarding the nature of war itself. Perhaps the notion of decisive battle --the presumption of the causality between major combat operations and the ultimate political aim derived from the Napoleonic paradigm-- has rarely been decisive since

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<sup>16</sup> Most authorities on the partisan war correctly cite Hitler's malevolent intransigence regarding the Soviet peoples and the SS reign of terror behind the military zone of operations for the Army's failure. Undoubtedly, Hitler's intransigence and interference in the conventional fight against the Red Army was incompatible with the pragmatic conduct of the war and his pernicious ideological vision for the Soviet peoples doomed the German Army's ability to ultimately pacify the indigenous populace. This argument is well justified but is also too narrow as it gives a free pass to the Army, especially the General Staff, for their part in planning the campaign that set the conditions for this failure. Grenkevich argues that those historians who associate the immense scale of the Soviet partisan movement entirely with Nazi brutality "are only partially correct" and such an understanding a "gross over-simplification." Grenkevich, 112.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Dallin's assessment in *German Rule in Russia* of the German occupation supports this assertion: "there is little doubt that a skillful effort to win the population, civilian and military alike, to oppose the Soviet regime could have yielded substantial, and during the first months of the war perhaps decisive, results." Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-45*, (London: MacMillan, 1957), 65. Grenkevich also supports this conclusion citing Field Marshal Günther von Kluge: "he could successfully fight the Soviet partisans only if Berlin promised to create a new Russian state and instituted a policy ending collectivization." Grenkevich, 109-110. Additionally, commenting on the 1942 evolution in German anti-partisan operations, Howell states: "Put into practice in the fall of 1941 when the security divisions were full strength rather than mere skeletons, it might have nipped the (partisan) movement in the bud. In the fall of 1942 there was little chance it would work." Howell, 121.

the wars of the Emperor himself. Perhaps what is truly decisive in war often happens in the hearts and minds of the subjugated people themselves after the battles pass by. The window of opportunity between the end of major combat operations and that intangible decision made in the “conquered peoples” hearts and minds deserves greater attention in the campaign planning process.

## **OPERATION BARBAROSSA: A LINEAR, KINETIC APPROACH**

### **Strategic and Operational Objectives**

On 21 July 1940, Hitler assembled the chiefs of Germany’s military services and informed the group of officers of his intention to invade the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> Based on his initial guidance, Germany’s broad strategic aim for invading the Soviet Union was threefold.<sup>19</sup> First, the Soviet Union posed an ideological as well as a direct military threat to Germany in the immediate future. Second, defeating the Soviet Union would eliminate Britain’s last hope of attaining an ally on the European continent and thus force Britain to negotiate a peace with Germany. Finally, and perhaps most important, Germany wanted to establish pro-German governments in the Baltic States, the Ukraine and Belorussia to facilitate the exploitation of European Russia’s vast agricultural resources and raw materials. This last objective would fulfill Hitler’s ideological fantasy of eliminating the Bolshevik-Communist threat and seizing the *Lebensraum* necessary for the expansion of the *Reich*.

In order to achieve these aims, the German High Command deduced it was necessary to quickly annihilate the Red Army.<sup>20</sup> The destruction of the Red Army as far forward as possible

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<sup>18</sup> The attendees included all of the services’ senior chiefs (Brauchitsch, Raeder, Keitel, Jodl and Jeschonek (Göring’s representative). The conference established the general framework for the eastern campaign. Bryan Fugate, *Operation Barbarossa: Strategy and Tactics on the Eastern Front, 1941*, (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1984), 61.

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Megargee, *Inside Hitler’s High Command*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 102.

<sup>20</sup> General Halder recorded that the military aim of the invasion was “the defeat of the Russian Army, or the capture at least as much Russian territory as necessary to prevent enemy air attacks against

along the western frontier was therefore established as the campaign's military objective.<sup>21</sup> At end state, the German Army would seize all territory up to the Archangel-Astrakhan occupation line (also referred to as the Rostov-Gorki-Archangel line). By occupying the "A-A" line, the German Army would be in a position to control European Russia and ensure that any elements of the Soviet military that escaped east of the Ural mountains could pose no danger to German territory.<sup>22</sup>

Immediately following Hitler's directive, planning for Operation Barbarossa began in the last week of July 1940. The initial planning effort for the invasion was lead by General Erich Marcks. Marcks lead the Army High Command (*Oberkommando der Heeres* or OKH) planning effort from its inception in July 1940 until he presented "Operational Draft East" in August 1940.<sup>23</sup> In "Operational Draft East," the Army's "first cut" at the invasion plan, Marcks calculated that "the Army may need as little as eight weeks of combat operations, perhaps as many as eleven, to take Leningrad, Moscow and Kharkov, after which he expected no further organized Soviet resistance."<sup>24</sup>

Marcks was replaced by General Friedrich von Paulus in September 1940 when Paulus became the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations at OKH. From the time Paulus took over lead planning duties for the invasion until "*Fall Barbarossa*" was presented to Hitler on 5 December 1940, there were no significant changes to the initial assumptions developed by Marcks regarding organized Soviet resistance. The independent OKW study headed by Colonel Bernhard von Lossberg, after causing a great deal of consternation and suspicion in the high command, did not

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Berlin and the Silesian industrial areas." Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, 27 March 1941. Cited in Matthew Cooper, *The German Army, 1939-1945*, (Lanham, MD: Scarborough House, 1978), 253, n17.

<sup>21</sup> This statement is derived from General Erich Marcks description of Barbarossa's "operational aims." Matthew Cooper, *The German Army, 1939-1945*, (Lanham, MD: Scarborough House, 1978), 261.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed description of the broader strategic to operational context for the German planning for the Barbarossa campaign see George Blau's *The German Campaign in Russia (Planning and Operations)*, 1940-1942.

<sup>23</sup> Marcks, at the time not a member of the General Staff, was selected for this task based on his position as the Chief of Staff of the German 18<sup>th</sup> Army stationed in East Prussia and Poland following the occupation of Poland in the fall of 1939.

<sup>24</sup> Megargee, 104.

differ significantly from the Marcks-Paulus plan.<sup>25</sup> Lossberg “did not have any doubt about the feasibility of that goal (the destruction of the Red Army and the collapse of Soviet resistance).”<sup>26</sup>

In summary, the respective staffs of the Armed Forces High Command and the Army High Command each undertook substantial planning efforts focused on the destruction of the Red Army through simultaneous deep penetrations and encirclement by three Army Groups.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, very little effort was expended on the transition between the destruction of the Red Army and the establishment of the security necessary to realize the ultimate political and economic goals. As of late spring 1941, the General Staff had only “a vague idea” about the transition between combat operations and securing the occupied areas.<sup>28</sup> There were no preparations for unforeseen contingencies such as the possibility of an armed civil resistance following the destruction of the Red Army and the fall of Stalin’s regime.<sup>29</sup> During the entire planning process, Field Marshal Fedor von Bock was the only senior officer to suggest to Hitler that decisive battle alone would likely be insufficient to defeat the Soviet Union and gain control of the occupied areas.<sup>30</sup> Hitler answered von Bock’s lone objection by stating that he “was sure that once Leningrad, Moscow and the Ukraine had been captured, further resistance would be impossible.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Lossberg’s OKW study of a potential campaign in the Soviet Union was thirty pages long and code-named “Fritz,” in honor of his son. Lossberg’s study was similar in overall concept to the *OKH* plan for Operation Barbarossa presented in December 1940.

<sup>26</sup> Megargee, 105.

<sup>27</sup> Richie, 42-49.

<sup>28</sup> P-033 German Military Government. General Alfred Toppe, et. al., 1949.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Field Marshal Fedor von Bock was the Commander of Army Group Center until December 1941. In the fall of 1941, Von Bock, whose Baltic-German side of the family had old connections with the Imperial Russian Army, later endorsed a memorandum prepared by Captain Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt and two other Army Group Center staff officers in the fall of 1941 recommending the creation of a Russian Volunteer Army to serve alongside the Germany Army. The idea was subsequently endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief, von Brauchitsch, but quickly dismissed out of hand once it arrived at Führer Headquarters. Both Field Marshals were sacked by Hitler in December 1941 when the Führer assumed supreme command of the Army himself. Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, *Against Stalin and Hitler, 1941-1945*, (New York: John Day Company, 1973), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Cooper, *The German Army, 1939-1945*, 257.

Hitler and the German Army therefore never arrived at a clear, mutual understanding of the near-term objectives for the occupation of Soviet territory in the post-major combat phase of Barbarossa.<sup>32</sup> This oversight is incredulous considering the level of detailed planning expended on the long-term economic exploitation of the occupied areas and the fact that occupation's cast of characters grew to include almost every arm of the Nazi political, military and civil service system.<sup>33</sup> Based on agreements reached between the *Sicherheitsdienst* (the SS Security Service) and the Army (specifically the Quartermaster General) in May 1941, each element of the German Army, SS, police and civil administration assumed mutually exclusive roles in the convoluted scheme to secure the occupied areas and pacify the Soviet peoples.<sup>34</sup> As will be discussed, the most distinguishing feature of this pre-invasion planning was the degree to which the military was removed from overall security responsibility in the "political zone of operations."<sup>35</sup> The occupation of the Soviet Union was "more ideological, and thus a more political function," than the previous military occupations in Poland and in the West.<sup>36</sup> The area under Army control was therefore to be kept as shallow as possible. As the armies moved east, the boundary between the military zone of operations and political responsibility for the occupied areas was to be progressively advanced.

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<sup>32</sup> An explanation of why the German armed forces operated with such a divergent view from Hitler on the nature of war in general and the aim of the particular campaign could certainly be the basis for an independent study in itself. Suffice to say for this study, the senior German military leaders became quite adept at pursuing a policy of saying one thing to conciliate Hitler awhile planning all along to modify the operation in actual execution to offset the *Führer's* self-defeating political constraints. This ruinous situation within the highest level of Germany's political-military leadership obviously violated Clausewitz's dictum that political and military leaders must mutually understand a conflict's ultimate aim and type of war they will pursue to achieve that aim above all else.

<sup>33</sup> While no part of *Fall Barbarossa* specifically addressed security operations in the military zone of operations, the campaign plan did contain a special economic section entitled "*Oldenburg*." This section was a result of detailed planning (conducted by the Economic Staff for the East (*Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, headed General Georg Thomas) for the complex economic exploitation of the occupied areas. Grenkevich, 119.

<sup>34</sup> This agreement was also referred to as the Heydrich-Wagner agreement, signed 26 March 1941. Simpson, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Hitler stated to Keitel in a conference on 3 March, 1941 that "the future tasks in occupied Russia were so difficult they could not be entrusted to the military." Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 22.

<sup>36</sup> Howell, 12.

## The Military Zone of Operations

The success of the Army's plan to secure the Soviet territory following major combat operations depended on nine poorly equipped and ill-prepared security divisions ((*Sicherungsdivisionen*)) specially created for the invasion. According to German Army doctrinal, the military zone of operations was divided into the combat zone and an Army Rear Area Command (*Rueckwaertige Armeegebiet* or *Korücke*). As was the case in Poland in 1939 and the Western campaign in 1940, the *Korücke* mainly relied on habitually assigned military police units (*Feldgendarmarie*) to secure their lines of communication. In March 1941 however, based on the geographical scale of the battle space, OKH further divided responsibility for the military zone of operation between three Army Group Rear Area Headquarters (*Rueckwaertige Heeresgebiete*) with three of the newly formed security divisions assigned to each. The Army Group Rear Area Command could employ the security divisions in a direct support role to the Army Rear Area Command or in a general support role, laterally dispersed across the Army Group Rear Area as determined by the situation.

Each security division normally contained two security regiments (each containing two light infantry battalions), one each fusilier (a motorized infantry unit with some reconnaissance capability), anti-tank, engineer, and signal companies, along with support and police detachments.<sup>37</sup> Each of these units had varying levels of manpower, equipment, training and experience. These units' primary functions were static security of supply points and lines of communication. Although OKH stated the security divisions were responsible for "security, exploitation, and military administration," these makeshift units were not up to the challenge of fighting an intense partisan resistance.<sup>38</sup> For example, the 281<sup>st</sup> Security Division was equipped exclusively with an assortment of captured French, Belgian and Czech weapons and most of its

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<sup>37</sup> For a detailed description of each Security Division's particular modified table of organization, see Samuel Mitcham's *Hitler's Legions, The German Army Order of Battle, World War II*, (New York: Stein and Day, 1985).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



vehicles were also captured foreign types with no spare parts or tires.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the divisions were generally manned by retired, overage or inexperienced reservists with no expertise in counterintelligence operations and ill-prepared for anti-partisan warfare.

## The Civil Zone of Operations

Based on political decisions reached between Hitler and the Army, the responsibility for the occupied areas behind the military zone of operations would be transferred from military to civilian control under the newly created Ministry for the East European Region (*Ostministerium*). The new Ministry was headed by the longtime Nazi ideologue and Hitler crony, Alfred Rosenberg. The sheer vastness of the occupied area necessitated the division of Rosenberg's Ministry into four subordinate civilian administrative regions: *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (RKO- the Baltics and Byelorussia), *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* (RKU- the Ukraine), *Reichskommissariat Moskau* (RKM- Moscow) and *Reichskommissariat Kaukasien* (RKK – the Caucasus).<sup>40</sup> Each region would be administered by a complex Nazi civilian apparatus headed by a *Reichskommissare* appointed by, and answerable only to Hitler, through Rosenberg. The *Reichskommissaren* were responsible for all political, security and economic issues within their assigned areas. The *Reichskommissaren* were to be supported by the SS, SD, *Geheim Staatspolizei* (State Secret Police) and the complete German law enforcement system including the *Ordnungspolizei* (Order Police), *Gendamerie* (Rural Police), and *Geheim Feldpolizei* (Secret Field Police).

While this entire military-civilian apparatus seems overwhelming, in typical Nazi fashion it was more grandiose in title and appearance as opposed to effective in function. The actual forces allocated by the Barbarossa planners for security operations in the military zone of operations were implausibly small and poorly trained, equipped and manned considering the size

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 52-53. In execution, only *Reichskommissariat Ostland* and *Ukraine* were activated. Grenkevich, 113.

of their operational areas and the scope of their mission. To further weaken the unity of effort of the thin security forces, no method of central coordination existed between the Army, SS, police and civil authorities for operational issues that transcended the boundary between the military zone of operations and the Nazi civilian occupation authorities. As it turned out, responsibility for security in a given area was usually by default to the unit or agency that had the most personnel available on a case-by-case basis.<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to imagine a more complex yet poorly resourced plan to meet the challenges of imposing security over a fluid, chaotic environment.

## Summary

In summary, the Barbarossa planners simply did not envisage the necessity to transition to other lines of operations following the destruction of the Red Army and thus failed to plan accordingly. The half-measure of organizing and employing the security divisions in the Army Group Rear Areas was more in response to the geographical dimensions of the battle space versus a deliberate line of operation to stabilize the civilian populace in the occupied areas. In the words of historian Matthew Cooper: “the invasion plan that evolved, ambitious and daring though it proved to be, was hardly revolutionary in its concept; from the outset, the traditional strategy of *Vernichtungsgedanke* dominated all thought.”<sup>42</sup> The Foreign Armies East Branch of the General Staff’s Intelligent Department (*Fremde Heere Ost*, headed by Colonel Eberhard Kinzel) failed to anticipate the potential for a partisan movement to emerge that would resist the German occupation. While OKW’s Economic Staff for the East (*Wirtschaftsstab Ost*, headed General Georg Thomas) undertook detailed studies for the economic exploitation of the occupied areas, neither of the three separate major studies initiated by the Army High Command or the

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<sup>41</sup> Simpson, 42.

<sup>42</sup> Cooper, *The German Army*, 271.

subsequent wargames that validated the planning process examined the ways or means for the transition to from major combat operations to achieving those economic ends.<sup>43</sup>

The entire operational planning effort for the Barbarossa campaign began as a focus on rapidly destroying the Red Army in a single campaign and remained such up to December 1941. Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the Army, estimated in April 1941 that the war would “last up to four weeks of serious battles, then would be little more than a mopping-up operation against minor resistance.”<sup>44</sup> There simply was no branch plan or sequel to Barbarossa for contingencies.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the Army did not develop any line of operations to engage the Soviet people to take advantage of their potential disaffection upon the completion of major combat operations.<sup>46</sup> What did exist was a set of bureaucratic rules for the civil administration of the occupied areas and the SS plan to eradicate enemies of the *Reich*. Alexander Dallin, the foremost U.S. historian on German occupation policy and the Soviet partisan war succinctly surmised the invasion planning:

The striking aspect of German preparations for this, the greatest of campaigns, was the neglect of positive political planning. Military measures were outlined, discussed, and implemented with care and dispatch. Plans for the prompt utilization of economic resources in the occupied U.S.S.R. were developed with habitual thoroughness, and the personnel for these tasks assembled well in advance. But except for some vague statements about the future of the German East, there is no evidence whatever of high-level discussions of political problems- particularly any attempt to enlist the help of the Soviet population – during the entire period from July 1940 to March 1941.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Fugate, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> Howell’s assessment was: “Beyond planning for the initial attack and the end of hostilities, there was nothing. The deficiency was the same one that underlay the Barbarossa plan as a whole; all planning for the attack was predicated on a winning campaign of no more than four months duration.” Howell, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Numerous studies conducted during and immediately after the war suggested that the Soviet people bore no special loyalty to the Soviet regime and would likely support its overthrow if a viable alternative was developed and communicated effectively. Waldman, *German Occupation Administration and Experience in the USSR*, 43.

<sup>47</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 18.

# DECISIVE BATTLE FOUNDERS: THE RISE OF THE PARTISAN WAR

## 1941- The Genesis of the Early Partisan Movement

When the German Army crossed the Soviet frontier in June 1941, the Army High Command incorrectly assumed that the speedy pacification of the occupied areas would naturally follow the annihilation of the Red Army and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet government.<sup>48</sup> In the event that a guerrilla movement arose, the means to pacify the resistance absurdly relied on a policy of force and terror. This policy was a result of both the incongruity between the military forces available for the campaign and the political endstate in the East and closely paralleled Hitler's political philosophy and the general *modus operandi* of the National Socialist state. The German High Command issued "ten rules for German soldiers in battling guerillas" to all Army Group Rear Area commanders, one such "rule" succinctly summed up the entire policy:

Insidious partisan warfare can be destroyed only with the greatest resoluteness and a lack of consideration for all mitigating factors. Good-naturedness is stupidity and softness can be criminal. The partisans will be shot and the execution will be ordered by an officer. *A dead partisan accomplishes nothing* [italics added].<sup>49</sup>

Other than this philosophy of ruthlessness, no other practical, morally acceptable, uniform policy for anti-partisan operations emerged.<sup>50</sup> The Army High Command left it to the judgment of army commanders in the field to interpret and implement these "rules" in their respective areas of operations.

Remarkably, in the first months immediately following the invasion, popular feelings among the Soviet people on occupied soil were largely non-hostile towards the German Army,

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<sup>48</sup> Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories: The Memoirs of Hitler's Most Brilliant General*, (Munich: Methuen and Company, 1958), 175-178.

<sup>49</sup> Pronin, 177.

<sup>50</sup> Germany's head of anti-partisan combat units in 1942 described the German occupation policy in Russia at the Nuremberg trials after the war: "the lack of detailed directives resulted in a wild state of anarchy in all anti-partisan operations." Pronin, 202.

organized opposition was limited and collaboration was widespread.<sup>51</sup> By late 1941 however, provoked by the brutal extermination campaign waged by the SD's *Einsatzgruppen* (special action teams) and encouraged by the resurgence of the Red Army, popular feeling among the Soviet people turned against the German occupation. In the autumn of 1941, reports that small, scattered guerilla groups were operating in the German rear areas began to surface. The German Army's response to this development over the next year revealed the failure of the Barbarossa plan to meet such a contingency. By the end of 1942, the partisan movement's activity increased from random, small-scale guerilla actions to massive, well-coordinated operations involving numerous partisan brigades.<sup>52</sup>

In the early weeks of the invasion, partisan activity was largely a makeshift, spontaneous phenomenon executed by small pockets of Red Army and Communist Party cells. It was by no means a well-organized movement supported by popular mass participation. The German Army's rapid advance denied the Soviet government the time it believed would be available in case of an invasion to coordinate the partisan resistance element of the Soviet national defense plan. In general, functional partisan units and the supporting underground communist party network were not fully established and operational before the invasion in the Baltic states, the Ukraine, or Belorussia.

However, the Soviet government had taken the initial steps to prepare the essential nodes to form the organizational structure of the partisan infrastructure before the invasion. For example, select units of the Red Army (the so-called destruction battalions) and security detachments of the Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs, or *Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennikh del* (NKVD), along with local communist party leaders were instructed to form the organizational backbone of the partisan resistance and make preparations to mobilize the local

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<sup>51</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 59. Grenkevich, 110-111.

<sup>52</sup> Grenkevich, 6.

populace.<sup>53</sup> In some cases, local communist party organizations made significant progress before German forces arrived. Some local communist party headquarters reported shortly after the invasion that they had already stockpiled weapons, food and other supplies, identified provisional partisan unit commanders, especially those with experience from the Russian Civil War, and conducted seminars on guerilla resistance for selected leaders.<sup>54</sup>

The first organized Soviet efforts to activate the partisan groups began between July and September 1941. These efforts focused on two lines of operations. The first was an information operation that used official addresses by the Party and the State directly to the Soviet peoples to kindle the spirit of popular resistance in the occupied areas.<sup>55</sup> Far from simple propaganda, these directives established the parameters of the partisan war by specifying those actions to take against the German Army and they provided the basis for directives issued subsequently by local partisan headquarters.<sup>56</sup> The second line of operation was the physical infiltration, by ground and air, of small Red Army and NKVD detachments to establish contact with communist party officials within the occupied areas and form the nuclei of new partisan units.

Throughout the remainder of the autumn and into the winter of 1941, the partisan movement still lacked a mass popular element. By conservative estimate, the partisan movement had as few as ten thousand active fighters at the end of 1941.<sup>57</sup> Building on the Red Army-NKVD-Communist Party nucleus, the early manpower for most partisan units was created by rounding up and reorganizing individual Red Army soldiers and small units that escaped

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<sup>53</sup> Howell, 44-45.

<sup>54</sup> Grenkevich, 73.

<sup>55</sup> The most famous of these addresses was "Stalin's Order" of 3 July 1941 that exhorted the Soviet peoples to resist the German invaders by all possible means. Grenkevich, 74.

<sup>56</sup> For example, the Communist Party subsequently issued instructions "Concerning the Organization of the Struggle in the Rear Areas of German Forces," on 18 July 1941 to all of its subordinate territorial organizations designating partisan warfare mission and specifying the tactics, techniques and procedures for executing these missions. Grenkevich, 75.

<sup>57</sup> Soviet estimates are as high as 90,000 partisan fighters in the same period. The figure cited here is credited to historian Alexander Werth in *Russia at War, 1941-1945*.

encirclement and capture.<sup>58</sup> Organization and weaponry of these initial partisan forces differed from unit to unit. Their mission in the initial months was limited by necessity to slowing the German advance by any means and general attacks to destroy war materials and civil infrastructure in the occupied areas. Although the partisan movement's contributions to the war effort were meager in the first months, they were beginning the evolutionary steps necessary to forge a more powerful movement in the months to come.

The Soviet government's propaganda and counter-propaganda activities are other examples of key operations that set the conditions for the later partisan explosion. The Soviet government recognized early in the war the advantages of focusing its propaganda and counter-propaganda efforts behind the front lines. The key themes of the Soviet propaganda effort, as directed by the Communist Party, were: to explain the dangers of losing the war by exposing the nature of the true German aims, to stress the advantages of the Socialist system and to make an appeal to Russian nationalism. Although the German Army did to some degree degrade the effectiveness of the Soviet propaganda effort through sheer presence and intimidation, the majority of the Soviet population in the occupied areas continued to receive the contents of Soviet governmental newspapers and radio broadcasts.<sup>59</sup> The Soviet government's early propaganda efforts which were cleverly linked to deep-rooted Russian cultural values significantly enhanced the Communist Party's ability to recruit and organize larger partisan formations in the occupied areas.<sup>60</sup>

By late summer 1941, the German Army as a whole began to report a rise in guerilla activity and the senior commands finally began to recognize the threat posed by the partisan movement. Having no preconceived idea about the partisan threat or how to effectively fight it,

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<sup>58</sup> Estimates for the percentage of Red Army soldiers in the partisan bands range from sixty percent in the first year to less than thirty percent by 1943. On average though, Red Army soldiers were the mainstay of the Soviet partisan forces, a fact contrary to the myth that the partisan movement was largely a spontaneous civil resistance. Grenkevich, 127-128.

<sup>59</sup> Grenkevich, 87.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 85.

the German Army responded with an ineffectual, brutal, collective punishment approach. In Berlin, OKW Chief General Wilhelm Keitel issued a directive that stated:

The troops available for securing the conquered Eastern territories will, in view of the size of this area, be sufficient for their duties only if the occupying power meets resistance, not by legal punishment of the guilty, but by striking such terror into the population that it loses all will to resist. The Commanders concerned are to be held responsible, together with the troops at their disposal, for quiet conditions in their areas. They will contrive to maintain order, not by requesting reinforcements, but by employing suitably draconian methods.<sup>61</sup>

The Army wasted no time in echoing these orders. Army Group Center and the Commandant of Fourth Army's Rear Area Command issued nearly identical orders to their respective security divisions in October and November 1941 regarding anti-partisan operations:

In the event of partisan activity, two Russian civilians should be shot for every German soldier killed and three civilians would be executed for every important German facility attacked. Furthermore, any Russian civilians found near railway or road bridges after the nighttime curfew should be shot on sight.<sup>62</sup>

This response was typical of the broader German reaction to the partisan movement in the first six months of the war and demonstrated the shortsightedness of the Barbarossa plan in regards to securing the military zone of operations. The German Army was already losing the partisan war in four key areas. First, the under-strength security divisions that were assigned the responsibility for "security, exploitation, and military administration" in the occupied areas became localized by necessity to physically protect the German lines of communication and key facilities.<sup>63</sup> As a result, tens of thousands of by-passed Red Army soldiers that took refuge in the more inaccessible parts of the country were eventually collected by the NKVD and local communist party leadership for indoctrination into the nascent partisan bands. The security divisions were essentially blind to the formation of this gathering opposition. Second, the Army Rear Area

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<sup>61</sup> Supplement to Directive 33, 23 July 1941. Cited by H.R. Trevor-Roper, (ed.), *Blitzkrieg to Defeat: Hitler's Wartime Directives 1939-1945*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 89-90.

<sup>62</sup> Howell, 70-72.

<sup>63</sup> Howell states of the security divisions' effectiveness: "Due to the failure of *OKH* to prepare for an irregular uprising, they were badly handicapped from the start by a lack of understanding of partisan resistance and training in methods of combating it. Initially, this lack of direction resulted at times in a "wild state of anarchy" in anti-partisan operations and the unnecessary killing of numbers of innocent civilians." Howell, 54.



Commands were not organized with the appropriate intelligence assets to ferret-out the underground local communist party organization that was the real driving force behind the recruiting, equipping and decentralized command and control of the early partisan movement. Third, in the early months at least, the *Wehrmacht's* Propaganda Division was completely ineffective in countering the Soviet propaganda that successfully inspired the Soviet citizenry to take up “all-people’s war.”<sup>64</sup> Lastly, the Army took no innovative steps to leverage the obvious disaffection many Soviet peoples expressed for the communist party and the Soviet government.<sup>65</sup> Instead, the Army relied on the most draconian measures to enforce security in a manner that served to legitimize the Soviet’s intensive propaganda effort to reveal the true intentions of the German occupation.

## **1942- From Scattered Resistance to “All-peoples War”**

The culmination of Operation Barbarossa in the winter of 1941-1942 did not diminish the grave nature of the German threat to Soviet survival. Any suspicion or hesitation Stalin maintained against launching a popular mass insurgency in the occupied areas was wiped away after the failure of the Soviet counter-offensive at Kharkov, the German gains in the Crimea, and the beginning of the German drive to the Caucasus in the summer of 1942.<sup>66</sup> By late summer, the German Army controlled forty-five percent of the Soviet population that in turn accounted for

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<sup>64</sup> Howell states: “The efforts of the *Wehrmacht* Propaganda Division to counter this steady loss of native support were woefully inadequate and ended in failure. It was a losing effort from the start. Closely restricted by the short-sighted *OKW* policy as to what it could and could not tell the people and opposed by well-executed Soviet counter-propaganda which cleverly exploited almost every aspect of German negativism and almost every German mistake, the propaganda Division never had a real chance to accomplish its mission once the true German war aims were revealed.” Howell, 111.

<sup>65</sup> Whether this disaffection was the result of anti-communist sentiment or nationalist sentiment is difficult to distinguish, the key point is that large sections of the Soviet populace, such as the Ukrainian people, were potentially valuable allies for the German Army against the communist-based partisan resistance. Grenkevich, 109.

<sup>66</sup> The overriding intention of the Soviet partisan movement, at least from Stalin’s perspective, is not well understood in the West. The movement was orchestrated first and foremost to maintain communist party influence over Soviet peoples in the occupied areas, not to necessarily defeat the German occupation. The distinction is quite counterintuitive, but it sheds light on the trepidation Stalin maintained for arming and inspiring a popular mass movement that would only have to be suppressed as soon as the German Army was driven off Soviet soil. Grenkevich, 81-82.

thirty-three percent of Soviet industrial production, as well as forty-seven percent of the nation's total agricultural area.<sup>67</sup> It was not until this period, while under the continued threat of annihilation, which Stalin and the Soviet government finally committed to expand the scope of the partisan war.

The creation of the Soviet Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement on 30 May 1942 marked the full activation of central and regional headquarters for partisan forces and the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of the Soviet partisan movement.<sup>68</sup> A high ranking and long-time Communist Party functionary, Panteleimon Ponomarenko, was appointed by Stalin to head the new organization.<sup>69</sup> This key event signified the transition of the partisan movement from a decentralized, largely ad hoc resistance under the command and control of underground local communist party cells to a highly centralized paramilitary organization whose chain of command extended down from the Central Headquarters in Moscow through republic and district headquarters to individual partisan detachments and brigades. At this point, the nature of the partisan war from the Soviet perspective expanded from local, independent actions to a broad operational-level campaign.

The Central Headquarters was organized with operational, intelligence and security departments that enabled it to conduct operational-level planning and closely coordinate its intelligence activities with the NKVD and the Red Army's Main Intelligence Directorate (the GRU). This robust capability allowed the scope of the partisan mission to expand beyond the localized, uncoordinated operations against specific German military targets to large-scale operations in coordination with Red Army conventional operations. Additionally, the Central Headquarters was able to take on the planning and direction of other complex activities such as

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<sup>67</sup> Grenkevich, 88.

<sup>68</sup> The new centralized command's responsibilities included maintaining reliable communications with partisan formations, coordinating their activities with Red Army operations, propagating guerilla warfare experience, general logistical support, training and transport for newly formed units going behind German lines. Grenkevich, 92.

<sup>69</sup> P.K. Ponomarenko was the former First Secretary of the Belorussia Communist Party and was given the rank of Lieutenant General in the Red Army in 1943 by Stalin. Grenkevich, 92-94.

the massive campaign against the German railway system. Furthermore, the partisan bands began to take on missions of far greater strategic importance: political and psychological operations directed at the indigenous populace in the occupied areas, assassinations of Soviet collaborators and punitive raids against villages, farms, and police sympathetic to the German occupation.

The growing strength of the partisan movement was evident by the autumn of 1942. The Central Headquarters consolidated and improved its command and control over the partisan bands already functioning in the occupied areas and “significantly increased the number of training centers for partisan demolition experts, signalmen, and scouts.”<sup>70</sup> On 5 September 1942, Stalin headed a strategic planning conference in Moscow that included the senior members of the Commissariat for Defense, the Party Central Committee, the Central Headquarters for the Partisan Movement, and the senior regional partisan leadership from the Ukraine, Belorussia and the Orel and Smolensk salients. At this conference, Stalin assessed the first year of the partisan movement and declared it “one of the decisive factors in achieving victory over the enemy.”<sup>71</sup> More importantly, the main point of the conference was to emphasize to the assembled body the necessity to aggressively expand the movement to an “all-peoples war” in the coming months.

### **1942- One Last Opportunity: The German Experience with Indigenous Security Forces**

The German Army had one last opportunity in 1942 to recover from its failure to secure the occupied areas and pre-empt the massive expansion of the partisan war to an uncontrollable scale. A number of senior field commanders that understood the reality of the situation raised warnings back to Berlin that continuing the current occupation policies would further antagonize the indigenous population and only strengthen the ranks of the partisan bands.<sup>72</sup> Some advocated that the German Army could separate the indigenous people in the occupied areas from Stalin by gaining their trust through fair treatment and allowing some degree of self rule. Field Marshal

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 109.

Günther von Kluge, the Commander of Army Group Center, declared “he could successfully fight the Soviet partisans only if Berlin promised to create a new Russian state and instituted a policy ending collectivization.”<sup>73</sup> In February 1942, Hitler responded to the growing course of arguments emanating from his commanders in the East:

Germany wages war in the East for self-preservation, that is, in order to improve the basis for a secure food supply for Europe, but particularly for the German nation. It is not the purpose of this war to lead the people of the Soviet Union to a happier future, or to give them full freedom or political independence.<sup>74</sup>

Hitler’s message to the German Army in the Soviet Union in early 1942 did not provide the pragmatic planning guidance the German Army needed to confront the growing partisan war. By this point in the war, most German Army commanders realized they had squandered their opportunity to establish an effective administration for the occupied areas.<sup>75</sup> It was during the spring of 1942 however, that some innovative German commanders actually implemented effective security and anti-partisan solutions that achieved local success. These operations marked the first and only period in the war where the German Army actually created pockets of stability within the military zone of operations and made substantial progress against the partisan movement. One of the most successful examples that illustrated the potential of using indigenous security forces was the Kaminski Brigade experiment in self-rule and indigenous anti-partisan operations in the Second Panzer Army Rear Area beginning in the spring of 1942. Indigenous units like the Kaminski Brigade represented an effective alternative to the “force and terror” policy of direct military control on the Eastern Front.

In the spring of 1942, partisan bands controlled almost the entire rear area of Army Group Center’s area of operations and the number of partisan attacks had significantly increased, particularly in the Bryansk sector. A group of officers on the Army Group Center staff studied the problem and reported their findings to Army High Command:

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>74</sup> Howell, 97, n.1.

<sup>75</sup> Pronin, “Guerilla Warfare in the German Occupied Soviet Territories, 1941-1944,” 203.

A necessary precondition for the lasting destruction of the partisans is the friendship of the Russian population. If we do not achieve this, the partisans will have every means of obtaining supplies and recruits assured them ... it is difficult for a primitive people to believe in the friendship of someone who has taken his last cow.<sup>76</sup>

While the Army Group Center planners realized the necessity for a radical paradigm shift in occupation policy, it lacked sufficient resources to implement these manpower intensive policies in the rear areas. In the spring of 1942, the German Army in the East was experiencing the first of many manpower crises. As a matter of expediency, the Army High Command finally allowed for “additional native units to be enlisted from among anti-Soviet inhabitants and reliable former prisoners of war.”<sup>77</sup>

Fortuitously, around the same time German railway repair troops under constant partisan attack in the Bryansk area “encountered a heavily armed group of Russians wearing white arm bands with a St. George’s cross on them.”<sup>78</sup> The group was under the command of Bronislav Kaminski, a fervent anti-communist. The band consisted of 1,400 well-armed men who had been fighting the Red Army and the partisan bands in the Bryansk sector in the weeks preceding the arrival of Second Panzer Army. A representative of Kaminski was escorted to Second Panzer Army headquarters in Orel where he promptly assured the German command that Kaminski’s Brigade was “ready to actively fight the guerillas” as well as carry on a propaganda campaign against the communists and the partisans.<sup>79</sup> General Rudolf Schmidt, the commander of Second Panzer Army, subsequently appointed Kaminski *Bürgermeister* (mayor) of an area within *Körucke* (Army Rear Area) 532 centered on the town of Lokot (41,000 inhabitants).<sup>80</sup> Kaminski’s indigenous authority was responsible for all security issues and all economic and

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<sup>76</sup> Message communicated from Army Group Center Headquarters to Berlin in March 1942. Pronin, 206.

<sup>77</sup> Howell, 86.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>79</sup> Pronin, 211.

<sup>80</sup> Theo Schulte, *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 173.

political life within the Lokot district. General Schmidt established a chain of command where Kaminski was answerable only to himself.<sup>81</sup>

With the approval of the commanders of Army Group Center (Field Marshal von Kluge), Second Panzer Army (General Schmidt) and *Körücke* 532 (General Bernhard), Kaminski quickly introduced a series of reforms in the Lokot district. He returned parcels of private land and livestock to local peasants and at the same time persuaded the *Koriücke* to crackdown on looting by German Army units. Additionally, he combined a series of fortified villages with an expanded self-defense unit to create an integrated anti-partisan defense plan for the Lokot district. The local peasants, with a newfound economic stake in the program's success and a measure of protection from partisan retribution, increased agricultural production and were able to sell excess foodstuffs to the Army through an open market system.<sup>82</sup> The improvements in security and logistical support for the Army were achieved at little cost in manpower. There were no occupation units assigned within the district and the Army's main role was advisory, namely a *Koriücke* liaison officer (Major von Veltheim) and a tactics expert (Colonel Rübsam).<sup>83</sup> *Koriücke* 532 reported to Army Group Center in August that the Kaminski experiment was "a highly successful method, far superior to the direct military level system imposed elsewhere."<sup>84</sup>

Over the next year, the Kaminski Brigade grew in strength from under 2,000 to over 10,000 well-armed men with substantially increased firepower, good transport and strict discipline.<sup>85</sup> The Kaminski Brigade began to conduct large-scale anti-partisan operations in *Koriücke* 532 beyond the Lokot district. An assessment of the partisan situation shows the Kaminski Brigade's effectiveness: in December 1941, partisans controlled the entire rear area of Army Group Center in the Bryansk area and an estimated 7,000 partisans roamed the Bryansk-Lgov-Kursk rail line. By the end of 1942 however, the entire Lokot "liberated region" was

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<sup>81</sup> Pronin, 211.

<sup>82</sup> Schulte, 174.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 175, n. 95.

<sup>85</sup> Howell, 174.

cleared of partisans and the Bryansk-Lgov rail line was secure out to a distance of four miles.<sup>86</sup>

The Kaminski Brigade also had a major impact on the propaganda war outside the region, the Soviet government in Moscow made a number of unsuccessful attempts to assassinate Kaminski and issued a standing bounty of 200,000 rubles for his life. Alexander Pronin argues that the Kaminski Brigade was the most successful collaborative anti-partisan effort of the war and was “one of the best illustrations of the exercise of initiative by a local commander” in the partisan war (General Schmidt).<sup>87</sup>

In summary, three key questions concerning the Kaminski Brigade deserve closer analysis. Why did the practice of limited self-government and indigenous anti-partisan units initially succeed in Army Group Center? Why did it ultimately fail? Lastly, why were other collaborative efforts like the Kaminski brigade not expanded to the rest of the occupied areas?

Three factors stand out concerning the relative success of the Kaminski Brigade. First, General Schmidt assumed risk (political as well as tactical) in return for a creative, high-payoff solution and established a streamlined chain of command to support Kaminski. Secondly, Kaminski prioritized meeting the local populace’s “hierarchy of needs” (security, economic opportunity, some possibility of self-government) before taking on loftier objectives. Third, both Kaminski and Schmidt realized the necessity to reduce the presence of the German Army in the Lokot district. This measure reduced friction within the district from the naturally occurring animosity between the proximity of an occupying force and the local inhabitants. In this case study at least, it appears that reprehensible behavior is more palatable to the local population when the “doer” is a homegrown security force versus a foreign occupying army.

Three factors played a large role in the Kaminski experiment’s ultimate failure. Obviously, when the Red Army seized control of the Lokot district, Kaminski’s Second Panzer Army patrons were forced to withdraw leaving the situation untenable for Kaminski. However,

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<sup>86</sup> Pronin, 208.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 213, 236.

the Brigade was deemed so valuable by Army Group Center that it was transferred west in September 1943 during the German retreat.<sup>88</sup> But even before the arrival of the Red Army, the experiment was a classic case of too little, too late. By the time General Schmidt implemented the program, a large and well-organized partisan domain was already established in the surrounding districts of the *Korücke*. This suggests that in the co-evolution of partisan and anti-partisan competition, there is a window of opportunity early on in a campaign that must be exploited by the occupying force. Finally, the Clausewitzian element of friction was active in Army Group Center. Many subordinate commanders, Germans as well as allied units such as the Hungarians, had a tremendous animosity towards Kaminski's Brigade over race, the unit's autonomy, and the commander's often brazen treatment of German and allied officers.<sup>89</sup> This petty jealousy often worked to frustrate Kaminski's efforts unbeknownst to Army Group Center or Second Panzer Army.

Other collaborative programs were implemented in various regions of the occupied areas but not on the scale or to the degree of success as the Kaminski Brigade.<sup>90</sup> Although some German commanders realized the need for a paradigm shift in occupation policy, if only for pragmatic rather than altruistic reasons, the results of the Kaminski Brigade experiment were not powerful enough to overcome the entrenched National Socialist view of the war in the East. The pragmatic concerns of frontline commanders were unable to co-exist with Nazi political ideology. The German occupation policy at its core was based on exploitation of the Russian people and a belief that the Russian people were already accustomed to brutal repression under the communist state. A pragmatic policy of self-rule and collaborative anti-partisan operations required a

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<sup>88</sup> Schulte, 179.

<sup>89</sup> Howell, 89.

<sup>90</sup> Another example of the potential of forming indigenous forces to fight the partisan war in return for limited self-rule was the case of former Red Army General A.A. Vlasov's "Russian Liberation Army" or (ROA). In practical terms however, the Vlasov Movement, and its military arm, the ROA, never progressed beyond a symbolic initiative versus a real fighting force. The ethnic Cossack formations formed after the German campaigns in the Crimea in 1942 were another such example. Grenkevich, 140-141.



measure of autonomy and regard for the basic welfare of the indigenous population. For this reason, the Kaminski Brigade experiment was an isolated success.

As the year 1942 drew to a close, it is clear that last chance the German Army had in securing the occupied areas within the zone of military operations had passed. The broader operational picture on the Eastern Front, which included the loss of an army at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-1943 and the debacle at Kursk the following summer, dictated that the German Army commit every available resource at its disposal against the Red Army. The partisan movement subsequently grew in scale and intensity from late 1942 to its apogee in the summer of 1944.<sup>91</sup> During Operation Bagration, the destruction of Army Group Center by four Soviet fronts, the partisan forces operated in large-scale formations seizing key terrain blocking the German withdraw and executing massive attacks against conventional German formations. The partisan operations conducted after 1942 are beyond the scope of this study. However, the transition of the partisan movement from an ad hoc guerilla resistance to a massive 500,000 man paramilitary force conducting operational-level shaping operations later in the war reinforces the significance of that period of transition operations in the initial period of war. Had the German Army envisioned an operational-level approach utilizing indigenous security forces similar to that of Second Panzer Army and the Kaminsky Brigade early in the Barbarossa campaign, the situation in the occupied areas could have been more conducive to conducting sustained operations against the Red Army in 1943-1944.

## **BARBAROSSA IN RETROSPECT: PLANNING TO FAIL**

Why did the German Army, a force at the zenith of operational and tactical excellence in 1940-41, so completely fail in its attempt to secure the occupied areas following Operation Barbarossa? This study's thesis concludes that the German Army failed because the planning effort for Operation Barbarossa was dominated by a linear understanding of the problem: the

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<sup>91</sup> Howell, 137.

planners assumed that once the Red Army was destroyed and Stalin's grip in the occupied areas broken, resistance to the occupation would collapse. The Barbarossa planners (primarily Marcks, Paulus and Lossberg, and the supporting OKW and OKH staffs) were among the most brilliant and experienced staff officers in the German Army. Nearly all had played key roles in the years of Germany's amazing victories leading up to the invasion of the Soviet Union, a period in which the German Army had essentially subjugated all of Western Europe. By any measure, these men were not amateurs. Quite the opposite, they were skilled, veteran professionals serving in one of the most successful armies of all time. Why then would they stake the venture's success entirely on a single campaign and so readily assume that decisive battle alone would suffice to secure the broader objectives in the East?

The answer lies in three interrelated dynamics that greatly influenced their conception of the coming war in the East. First, the Barbarossa planners' understanding of the challenges they faced in securing the occupied areas must be viewed in the context of the German Army's doctrine and experience, neither of which suggested that major combat operations alone were insufficient to achieve complex political aims. Second, the planners' total lack of appreciation of Soviet society, culture and politics rendered them incapable of recognizing and exploiting the weakness and degrading the strengths of the Soviet system. Finally, the German Army's indifference to "interagency" unity of purpose produced catastrophic second and third order consequences that simply could not be overcome later in the war. Each of these dynamics is addressed here in some detail.

## **Doctrine and Experience**

Doctrine, perhaps more than any other characteristic of an army's framework, shapes the army's perception of war and determines how it will perform in battle. Some historians incorrectly suggest that the theoretical foundation for the German "blitzkrieg" doctrine of World War II was established in the 1930s, or perhaps even earlier with the storm-troop tactics of

1918.<sup>92</sup> Both of these chronological start points are in fact only recent modifications to a longstanding continuation of the Prusso-German school of military thought. The German doctrine that shaped the planning for the invasion of the Soviet Union was largely a continued evolution of the Napoleonic paradigm that was handed down and adapted to the times since Napoleon's destruction of the Prussian Army at Jena-Auerstadt in 1806.

Napoleon's brief and decisive 1806 campaign painfully demonstrated to the Prussian military establishment the two central Napoleonic precepts. First, the best method to attain the political goal in war was to destroy the enemy's main army to the greatest extent possible. Second, the best approach to achieve that end was to advance rapidly and deeply into the enemy's territory and engage the main enemy army in a single, climatic battle.<sup>93</sup> The Prussian Army, between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and its emergence in the 1860s as Europe's dominant land power, underwent significant transformation inspired by the ideas and leadership of two men: Gerhard von Scharnhorst and August Neidhardt von Gneisenau. The ideas of the evolving Prusso-German school of thought were based largely on Scharnhorst and Gneisenau's "original interpretation of Napoleon's art of war."<sup>94</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, friend and pupil of both Scharnhorst and Gneisenau as well as accomplished Napoleonic scholar, began *On War* in 1819 and further amplified the Napoleonic paradigm's influence over German military theory. Peter Paret in *Makers of Modern Strategy* aptly described this enduring link between Napoleonic warfare and Prusso-German military theory:

Perhaps the most important legacies that German soldiers accepted from Clausewitz, two strands in the army's doctrine well into the twentieth century,

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<sup>92</sup> James Corum for example places the start point for the genesis of German doctrine in World War II in the interwar military reforms executed in the *Reichswehr* under General Hans von Seeckt without consideration for the previous generations of the Prusso-German school of military thought. James Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

<sup>93</sup> Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986) 131.

<sup>94</sup> Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 283.

were his agreement with Napoleon that a major victory was likely to be more important than many small successes, and his concept of imponderables.<sup>95</sup>

Continuing in the Napoleonic-inspired tradition of Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Clausewitz, Helmuth von Moltke and Alfred Schlieffen dominated German military thought from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War. Moltke and Schlieffen taught and practiced a style of offensive warfare that adapted Napoleon's precepts to the possibilities of the industrial age.<sup>96</sup> Moltke and Schlieffen's ideas guided German strategy throughout the First World War and strongly influenced Germany's most important Chiefs of the General Staff during the interwar period: General Hans von Seeckt (1919-1926) and General Ludwig Beck (1933-1938). Under von Seeckt and Beck's guidance, the interwar generation of German strategists and theorists, including General Heinz Guderian, updated the battle of annihilation concept to its armored-mechanized blitzkrieg version that was practiced with such great success in the early years of the Second World War.

The capstone doctrine for the German Army in World War II, Germany Army *Regulation 300, Truppenführung*, reflected the continuing basic precepts of the Napoleonic paradigm. *Truppenführung* emphasized the overarching goal of destroying the enemy's armed forces in battle and the importance of mass and velocity as the means to achieve that destruction. *Truppenführung* simply combined this enduring, though limited view of the purpose of war with modern combined arms tactics and techniques.<sup>97</sup> The result was a conceptual approach to warfare that synthesized the Napoleonic-inspired annihilation principle (*Vernichtungsprinzip*), the

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 296.

<sup>97</sup> The German Army's conceptual foundation was encompassed in *Die Truppenführung* (Unit Command) published in 1933 and revised in 1936. The doctrinal manual reflected a strong Clausewitzian influence from his theories in *On War*. Clausewitz was obviously influential because of his nationality, his status as one of the fathers of German nationalism, and his veneration by the great Chief of the General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke.

bedrock of Prusso-German doctrine since the mid-nineteenth century, with mobile warfare (*Bewegungskrieg*) made possible by technological innovations in the interwar period.<sup>98</sup>

The German Army therefore entered World War II guided by an overarching idea based largely on a tactical-level conception of warfare.<sup>99</sup> In fact, *Truppenführung* (Unit Command) was a tactical level single-service (Army) doctrinal manual. The *Kriegsakademie* circulated a draft *Kriegsführung* (War Command) in 1938 in an attempt to produce a joint services operational-level doctrine. When the war started the following year however, *Kriegsführung* was put on hold indefinitely. The German Army therefore fought all of World War II guided by the capstone principles set forth in *Truppenführung*. The German Army maintained that winning a war was possible through a single decisive battlefield victory created by the application of mobile warfare.

No development on the battlefield early on in the war caused this assertion to be seriously challenged. The German Army was the most formidable and effective military force the world had yet seen as demonstrated in the “blitzkrieg” victories during the period 1939 to 1941. This view however was the very antithesis to operational art in which “sequential operations and cumulative effects are the keys.”<sup>100</sup> Much like Clausewitz’s *On War*, which largely ignores post-major combat operations and contingencies for guerilla warfare, *Truppenführung* devoted little analysis to operations other than large-scale conventional operations.

This doctrine not only affected operations, but equally as important, it shaped officer education. For example, Historian Colin Heaton states that senior German leaders and military educators at the various military academies refused to incorporate counterinsurgency doctrine

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<sup>98</sup> Clausewitz’s interpretation of the purpose and means in war are the theoretical basis for the principle of annihilation (see Clausewitz’s *On War* (Howard and Paret, eds. and trans.), Book One, Chapter Two, Purpose and Mean in War, 90-99). However, General Alfred von Schlieffen, Chief of the Great General Staff from 1891 to 1906 is often criticized for taking the concept “far beyond what Clausewitz intended.” Condrell and Zabecki, 2.

<sup>99</sup> Condrell and Zabecki, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 3.

throughout the Army until 1944.<sup>101</sup> As a result, commanders in the field in 1941-1942 were left to devise their own tactics and techniques to combat partisans. According to Heaton:

The failure of German military forces to effectively deal with their insurgency problems stems from the entrenched linear military training, thinking and philosophy mandated at the *Kriegsakademie* where adherence to strict, classical applications of conventional methods of combined arms warfare along the guidelines of General Hans von Seeckt were literally gospel.<sup>102</sup>

While the German Army was doctrinally inclined to disregard the significance of military operations other than major combat operations, nothing in the contemporary German historical experience provided an opposing perspective to this theoretical view. Before World War II, the problem of securing and administering occupied areas behind the army was not a major concern for the German Army. Although the Prussian Army was surprised by the French irregular *franc-tireurs* who attacked German lines of communications in the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71, the Germans took quick and ruthless action against the guerillas and their sympathizers achieving the desired effect with relative ease.<sup>103</sup> The trend continued during World War I in the West where resistance to the German Army was largely non-existent.<sup>104</sup>

The most experience the German's had in security operations and pacifying insurgent movements was in maintaining internal security against communist uprisings during the Weimar Republic between 1918 and 1923.<sup>105</sup> There is no thorough historical analysis to suggest why the experience gained by the *Reichswehr* and the paramilitary police (*Shutzpolizei*) in this period was not incorporated into German Army doctrine in the interwar period. The most likely explanation is twofold. First, the period under the early Weimar Republic was one of great confusion for the central government, especially the roles between the Army and the police in the struggle against the communist groups. There was simply no mechanism to capture and analyze the key lessons

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<sup>101</sup> Colin Heaton, *German Anti-Partisan Warfare in Europe 1939-1945*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2001) 117.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>103</sup> Simpson, 39.

<sup>104</sup> The German Army did experience some partisan activity such as that noted by General Walther Reinhardt in France in October-November 1918. However, this experience was in no way comparable in scale to the partisan experience in World War II. Heaton, 117.

<sup>105</sup> Simpson, 39.

learned in the bureaucratic chaos. Second, the majority of the highly traditional caste of the German Army's senior leadership likely preferred to remain focused on conventional military roles versus the experience in internal security from the 1920s that had become a highly politicized and exploited subject by Hitler and the SS in later years.

One of the most significant reasons why the German Army could not conceptualize the need for security operations specific to the invasion of the Soviet Union was the experience from the Eastern Front in World War I. German officers who had fought against the Russians in World War I and occupied vast areas of Russian territory at war's end remembered that "when overrun or cut off, the Russians of that day stoically accepted their fate as prisoners of war."<sup>106</sup> Independent operations by isolated or by-passed groups of Russian soldiers, the kind of which would form the core of the Soviet partisan movement in the wake of Operation Barbarossa, were practically unknown.<sup>107</sup> In relying on their experiences from World War I, most German officers disregarded the fact that the Russian Army of 1941 was not "a mere continuation of the armies of the Czars but a force born of a long and bitter revolutionary struggle in which the end justified any means."<sup>108</sup>

Between the campaign in Poland in September 1939 and the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the German Army overran Poland, Norway and Denmark, crushed the Dutch, Belgians and French, and drove the British off the European Continent. Through this entire experience, the German Army faced few problems consolidating the occupied areas and establishing pro-German regimes in place of the former national governments.<sup>109</sup> In less than two years, the German Army defeated all of the major armies in Europe and had yet to face any serious threat to the security environment following the decisive phase of major combat operations. For various reasons depending on the situation, the occupied countries offered little

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<sup>106</sup> Department of the Army Pamphlet Number 20-269, *Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1953), 264.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Simpson, 41.

resistance to German authority in the early years of occupation.<sup>110</sup> The resistance in the Balkans which erupted in May 1941 came at the same time that most units slated to participate in Operation Barbarossa were marching to their assembly areas or in the final stages of preparation for the invasion. The German Army, known for its organizational flexibility and ability to rapidly incorporate emerging developments in doctrinal, simply wasn't able to react to near real-time developments in the Balkans and modify the plan for initial operations in the Soviet Union.

### **Information Bias: The German Army's Appreciation of Soviet Politics, Society and Culture**

It can be argued that it was Hitler's idiotic policy towards Russia and Russians that lost him the war in the East, and, incidentally, ensured the survival of the Stalinist regime.<sup>111</sup>

Two factors largely explain the unfounded overconfidence of the German high command in the success of Operation Barbarossa and its disregard for planning post-major combat operations. The first was the faulty methods in which the high command was informed about the nature of the enemy and the environment. The second was the high command's longstanding attitudes and beliefs about the Soviet Union and its peoples. Before examining the German preconceptions about Russian culture and society, it is necessary to examine how the high command was informed about the Soviet Union. This process occurred primarily through three channels.

The high command's primary information conduit was based on the assessments developed by the Office of Foreign- and Counter Intelligence, or *Amt Ausland/Abwehr*, headed by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. The Foreign Branch's (*Abteilung Ausland*) mission was to collect information from a variety of sources on the foreign policies and military capabilities of other states, including the Soviet Union. Second, within the Army itself, the Foreign Armies East Branch of the General Staff (*Fremde Heeres Ost*) also collected and assessed information

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<sup>110</sup> For a case-by-case explanation, see Colin Heaton's Chapters "Partisans in the West" and "Partisans in the East." Heaton, 38-74.

<sup>111</sup> From the Translator's Foreword to Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt's *Against Stalin and Hitler*.



pertaining to the politico-military activities in Eastern Europe. Finally, the high command was also informed about the nature of the Soviet Union through the diplomatic channel that ran from Moscow through the German Foreign Office. The German Ambassador, Count Werner von Schulenberg, headed the Moscow office along with Germany's military attaché to the Soviet Union, General Ernst Köstring.

Although the high command possessed these outwardly redundant, independent information channels, it still operated in a state of information bias. In other words, the high command operated in a situation where it lacked sufficient information to enlighten or challenge its own assumptions. In the years preceding the German invasion, as German-Soviet relations became strained, the Soviet Union had done an effective job of disrupting German intelligence gathering activities within the Soviet state. Köstring, the military attaché in Moscow, complained to General Halder that the Soviet counterintelligence services had made intelligence collection all but impossible.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, the *Abwehr* had been trying unsuccessfully in the years preceding the invasion to insert agents in the Soviet Union with no success.

As for Foreign Armies East, that office had only begun a serious country-study of the vast Soviet Union in late 1939. Colonel Kinzel, an officer with no special intelligence training and no particular expertise in Russian or knowledge of the country, prepared the initial estimate of the enemy situation for OKH between 22 and 26 July 1940. The estimate Kinzel presented was presumably the same estimate used by General Marcks during the preparation of "Operational Draft East" in August 1940.<sup>113</sup> Foreign Armies East subsequently prepared three major intelligence updates between October 1940 and May 1941 which contained only minimal modifications to Kinzel's initial estimate.<sup>114</sup> The German's miscalculations about the strength and number of Red Army units, the potential for the Soviets to reposition Red Army forces from the Far East, and the existence of the T-34 tank have received a great deal of historical interest.

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<sup>112</sup> Megargee, 111.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 112.

However, the miscalculations on the socio-political environment in the Soviet Union were equally calamitous. Unsupported by fact, the series of estimates assumed that the Soviet Union was politically unstable, economically frail and psychologically weak. With this scarcity of sources, the General Staff was left to plan one of the greatest invasions in history armed with the flimsiest of information about the enemy and their own erroneous preconceptions.

An even more serious problem than the General Staff's lack of "actionable intelligence" was its reaction to information that challenged its assumptions. For example, on 10 August 1940, the obscure Military Geography Branch of the General Staff presented its "First Draft of a Military Geographic Study on European Russia."<sup>115</sup> Among the various problems the report identified in the invasion plan, it suggested that "even if all the targets (Leningrad, Moscow, the Ukraine) fell to the *Wehrmacht*, victory would not be certain" based on its assessment of the population, terrain, and the geographic dimensions of the battle space.<sup>116</sup> The dissenting assessment maintained that "the Soviets might not surrender or collapse after the fall of Leningrad, Moscow and Kharkov" and the "Soviet Union could maintain a state of hostilities for an indefinite period with support from Asia."<sup>117</sup>

General Marcks likely had knowledge of the Military Geography Branch's assessment before its official release but he did not take steps to address the consequences of the risk identified in the report in the early Barbarossa plan. Halder did not even perceive of the transition gap in Marcks' plan; "he simply assumed that the destruction of the Soviet forces and the occupation of a certain amount of territory would end the war."<sup>118</sup> Overall, the high command was simply not interested in information that challenged their preconceptions. When objections from subordinate commanders like von Bock at Army Group Center or from Russian experts like

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Köstring in Moscow surfaced, they received little attention from the high command.<sup>119</sup> The high command however was not alone in its obtuseness, other less sophisticated subordinate commands, readily accepted the high command's attitude. For example, during the mission planning phase for his unit's role in the invasion, General Walter von Reichenau, the Commanding General of the German Sixth Army, penned his own order that "historic and cultural values do not have any significance."<sup>120</sup> Additionally, As a result of the high command's strategic group-think and the readiness of many senior commands to accept such unfounded conclusions, the German Army crossed the frontier overconfident in their plan and ignorant to the possibility that a partisan movement would form in the wake of their advance.

As will be shown, the problem with the General Staff's understanding of the Soviet Union was only partly related to the varying degrees of effectiveness of its intelligence apparatuses; the other aspect was mind-set. When the senior leaders and key planners in the high command did receive useful information, their own mental models overrode their ability to use that information effectively. The high command had a "particularly insidious and disruptive" tendency to "accept convenient perceptions in place of hard facts, especially when the analysis left the realm of operations and moved into political, economic and social issues."<sup>121</sup> During the planning for Operation Barbarossa, the key trio of General Halder, General Kurt von Tippelskirch (the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence) and General Eberhard Kinzel (Chief of Foreign

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<sup>119</sup> One interesting anecdote that highlights the manner in which the high command responded to advice from Russian experts at subordinate commands is the example of the initial German surrender leaflet prepared by the OKW propaganda section in advance of the invasion. The leaflet exhorted Russian civilians and rank and file members of the Red Army to "rise against their oppressors and kill all commissars, Communist Party and Komsomol officials and members, etc." Captain Strik-Strikfeldt at Army Group Center was asked to review the leaflet for linguistic correctness. Strik-Strikfeldt wrote in his memoir that the leaflet's author "must be mad - imagine the other way around, an enemy leaflet condemning to death all Nazi Party members, the SS, the SA, the *Arbeitsdienst*, the Hitler Youth and all other Nazi organizations." In Strik-Strikfeldt's response, he argued that those condemned to death would fight to the very last and compel their countrymen to do the same. The "appropriate reviewing authority" in Berlin conceded by removing Communist Party and Komsomol members from the list but retained commissars. This instance caused Strik-Strikfeldt to question: "was it possible that no one at the top could have taken into account the political aspects?" Strik-Strikfeldt, *Against Stalin and Hitler*, 22.

<sup>120</sup> Grenkevich, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Megargee, 108.

Armies East) “allowed their perceptions to dominate the decision-making process” especially when faced with ambiguous information.<sup>122</sup>

What then were the perceptions about the Soviet Union that dominated the decision-making process? The German Army as a collective institution had a longstanding perception of the Soviet Union that seemed impervious to revision even during the planning process leading up to the invasion and occupation of the country. Two key notions stand out. First, the inherent backwardness and brutal character of the Russian people, intensified by the philosophy of Bolshevism, made the Soviet Union a natural threat to western European culture. Second, and most germane to this study, they viewed the Soviet Union as a “colossus of clay: politically unstable, filled with discontented minorities, ineffectively ruled, and militarily weak; it would collapse at the first great blow.”<sup>123</sup> In a word, the Soviet population had been “hopelessly and unalterably Bolshevized;” all that was required was “a gentle push from the outside, regardless of its source and medium” to bring about the collapse of the Soviet empire.<sup>124</sup> General Alfred Jodl, OKW Chief of Operations exemplified how pervasive this preconception was in the German high command when he stated “the Russian colossus will be proved to be a pig’s bladder; prick it, and it will burst.”<sup>125</sup>

Based upon the General Staff’s poor reliability of its information sources and its pervasive preconceptions about “the colossus of clay,” the staff’s overall vision of the enormous challenges associated with the invasion did not include the possibility for the emergence of a popular resistance movement nor a creative, effective solution to overcome such resistance beyond the means of the German Army itself. Two central questions that were absolutely essential to German political success in the East therefore were never addressed by the German high command before the invasion. First, would the Soviet people remain loyal to Stalin’s

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-45*, 64.

<sup>125</sup> Cooper, *The German Army, 1939-1945*, 259.

communist regime and sacrifice their lives considering the harsh and brutal existence following collectivization? What in all fairness should have been apparent concerning the Soviet Union, its people and the potential for a partisan resistance to emerge to challenge German control in the occupied areas? Second, what were the alternatives to deal with such resistance? Did the potential exist within Russian society to create an indigenous popular volunteer army to help secure the ultimate political endstate?

To answer the first question, history alone could have been used as a reliable guide. Even in 1941, the Russian people had a long history of remaining loyal to the Russian regime, tsarist or otherwise, and an equally long history of “giving their lives in great numbers to repel foreign invaders.”<sup>126</sup> A partisan concept had existed in the collective conscience of the Russia people at least since the time of Pugachev’s rebellion under Catherine the Great.<sup>127</sup> No invader, from the Mongols in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to Napoleon in 1812 “ever offered the Russian masses anything better than the conditions they already had.”<sup>128</sup> Therefore, the Russian people have resisted tenaciously for a regime they considered in their interest, but may be persuaded to turn on their regime only if a better alternative was offered. As was the case with Napoleon’s Army in 1812, an invader that worsened the conditions for the Russian people caused the average peasant “to rally to the regime with a vengeance.”<sup>129</sup> The conclusion the German Army should have drawn seems obvious in hindsight: either offer the Russian people a better alternative or prepare to fight a prolonged, bloody resistance.

The German planners should have also considered the more recent history of the Russian experience, especially the transformative nature of the Russian Civil War where the Red guerillas fought in the Ukraine, Belorussia, the Northern Caucasuses, Siberia and the Far East under the

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<sup>126</sup> Fugate, 11

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>129</sup> Grenkevich, 5.

direction of the General Headquarters of Partisan Detachments (CHQDP).<sup>130</sup> Based on these experiences, the Soviet Union published its first formal doctrine for partisan mission and tactics. The Red Army added “Partisan Operations” as a special chapter to its Field Manual as early as 1918. The stated mission was to “inflict maximum material damage on the enemy ... and to disrupt the enemy’s communication system.”<sup>131</sup> In 1919, the Red Army published a separate document entitled “Instruction for Organizing Local Partisan Detachments.”<sup>132</sup> Clearly, the Russian people had a long-ingrained, collective disposition to fight invaders; an instinct to fight that was hardened in the conflagration of the Russian Civil War and solidified as a key component of the national defense strategy.

The answer to the second question - whether the Russian people could have been persuaded to take up arms to further the German cause – is best answered in the remarkable account of Captain Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt. Strik-Strikfeldt was an ethnic Baltic German who had served in the Imperial Russian Army during World War I. During the Revolution, he served with the British Military Mission in the Baltic States and worked with the International Red Cross for famine relief in Russia. In the 1920s, he was appointed as the special representative for British and German engineering firms in Riga. Strik-Strikfeldt was evacuated along with the rest of the ethnic Germans Balts to Posen following the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in 1939.

In early 1941, Strik-Strikfeldt was invited to join Army Group Center with the rank of Captain and work as special advisor to Field Marshal von Bock on Russian affairs. During his assignment with Army Group Center, Strik-Strikfeldt’s duties included evaluating reports from the front, interrogating important prisoners and most importantly, touring the areas immediately behind the advancing armies and report back directly to von Bock on the feelings and attitudes of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

the Russian as well as the general conditions within the occupied areas.<sup>133</sup> Consistently, Strik-Strikfeldt reported that the Russian population was overwhelmingly receptive to the German occupation in the initial weeks of the campaign. The Russian people were quick to reinstate religious and social customs brutally suppressed since the Bolshevik Revolution. The Russian villagers widely viewed Hitler as “Hitler the Liberator” and were quick to establish their own local security in “liberated villages” to guard against Red Army patrols.<sup>134</sup> As for the Red Army itself, by-passed units readily surrendered in large groups. In many instances, Red Army officers surrendered entire units “eager to go into battle against Stalin and could not understand why they should be disarmed and marched off to a prison camp.”<sup>135</sup> Overall, to Strik-Strikfeldt, “it seemed as if a spontaneous anti-Stalin revolution had come into being in the occupied area.”<sup>136</sup>

Strik-Strikfeldt served in this capacity through early 1942, when, shortly after von Bock’s relief from command of Army Group Center, he was reassigned to OKH’s Foreign Armies East Branch. Based on his recent experiences in the East, Strik-Strikfeldt was appointed as commandant of the special camp established by OKH in Dabendorf near Berlin. Strik-Strikfeldt’s ostensible task was to train Russian propagandists for OKW’s Propaganda Department. However, Strik-Strikfeldt’s real hope, and that of his circle of enlightened supporters within the German Army, was that Dabendorf would become the center of the newly created Russian Liberation Movement under the leadership of former Red Army General Andrei A. Vlasov.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Strik-Strikfeldt spoke perfect Russian, was a longtime advocate for the Russian people and strong opponent of many of the Nazi policies in the East. His assessment therefore on the conditions and attitudes in the occupied areas during the initial months of the war is highly credible. Additionally, it must be mentioned that Strik-Strikfeldt’s experience was not unique. The German Army employed a large number of German Balts as linguists and “Russian experts” from army to divisional headquarters. While Strik-Strikfeldt himself certainly possessed some influence, most German Balts felt their expertise in Russian affairs was largely ignored with disastrous consequences. Strik-Strikfeldt, 32.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>137</sup> Vlasov was the former commander of the Soviet Second Shock Army (captured in the fighting at the Volkhov River in 1942). Strik-Strikfeldt and his supporters (including his immediate superior General Reinhard Gehlen, then head of Foreign Armies East and Colonel Claus von Stauffenburg from the

Strik-Strikfeldt's experience, as both the chief "Russian expert" at Army Group Center from 1941 to early 1942 and as the Commandant at Dabendorf where he worked closely with Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement from 1942 until the end of the war, provides the best view of the Russian perspective on this issue. The Russian political, societal and cultural point of view, as expressed by Vlasov and his close entourage, suggested that the opportunity clearly existed to exploit Russian disaffection with the communist system and facilitate the transition to a new order in the occupied areas under the authority of a popular indigenous Russian movement. An alternative course of action was available to the German Army in its quest to eliminate the communist threat and control the future of occupied Russia. Instead of a purely kinetic, external approach (annihilating the Red Army, destroying the communist political system, and attempting to emplace a German occupation authority over the ensuing chaos), Germany could have pursued a strategy of disrupting the Red Army to a sufficient point to facilitate the organization of a popular Russian Liberation Movement (using some existing components of the old regime) that, in conjunction with selectively applied further military force, could supplant the communist regime and ultimately further the overall German interests. This alternative collaborative approach was certainly a possibility early in the war in return for the prospect of self-government for the Russian people.<sup>138</sup>

From historical hindsight however, it is clear that Stalin and the Soviet government effectively tapped into the Russian cultural consciousness whereas Hitler and the German Army proved unable, or unwilling, to do the same. The result of this divergence on the subtle issue of

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General Staff's Operations Section) hoped to form a volunteer army from captured Russian prisoners and the cadre for a new civil administration around the charismatic Vlasov. The supporters of Vlasov's Russian Liberation Movement, which would eventually include Himmler (of all people) and the SS by 1944, were continuously derailed by Hitler's refusal to alter his policy on limited self-rule and the creation of an autonomous Russian Army in the occupied areas.

<sup>138</sup> This was the assessment Army Group Center presented to OKH in the autumn of 1941 based largely on the interrogation of numerous captured senior Red Army officers, including Stalin's son, Major Yakob Dzhugashvili and high-ranking political commissars. Army Group Center's report suggested that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were unconcerned about the success of a foreign occupation but extremely anxious about a revolt of the "internal enemy" to coincide with the German advance. Von Bock's report back to Berlin stated "the setting up of a National Russian Government in opposition to Stalin could pave the way for victory." Strik-Strikfeldt, 32-33.



culture ultimately had monumental consequences. Stalin's play on patriotic Russian nationalism strengthened Soviet resistance in the perilous years of 1941 and 1942. Hitler on the other hand, refused to allow an even remote chance of Russian self-rule and the employment of a Russian Liberation Army early-on in the war. Had the Russian Liberation Movement been fully supported, even as late as 1942, the entire course of the struggle in the East could have changed dramatically.

### **“Interagency” Unit of Purpose: Relations Between Civil and Military Administration**

It is easy enough to speak of crushing the Russian state and of exploiting the East. It was another matter to evolve an integrated policy and a cohesive staff that would proceed with its fulfillment without doubts and conflicts.<sup>139</sup>

A very dysfunctional “interagency” relationship existed between the military and civil arms of the German occupation administration within the Soviet Union at the point in time when Operation Barbarossa culminated in late 1941 and the Army began to realize the war would likely drag on indefinitely. Essentially, four main German entities competed with varying degrees of success for control of certain “fiefdoms” in the occupied areas. These key players were the Army, Alfred Rosenberg's Reich Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Ostministerium*), Himmler's SS, and the various agencies that comprised *Reichsmarschall* Göring's “Four Year Plan organization.” Each of these entities pursued their own individualistic objectives in the occupied areas – a situation that seriously subverted the potential synergy resulting from a common unity of purpose. In fact, the chaos and outright antagonism that characterized civil-military interaction during the initial period of the war produced disastrous, irreparable consequences for the Army as it began a concerted effort to solidify its hold over the occupied areas and create a semblance of stability to support continued operations against the Red Army.

This division of responsibility was basically along functional lines: military (the Army), police and security (the SS), economic (the Four Year Plan) and governmental administration (the

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<sup>139</sup> Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-45*, 10.

*Ostministerium*). This disjointed configuration was attributed to three assumptions made by Hitler. First, by dividing the occupation along functional lines, each entity could draw upon an experienced cadre of officials within Germany with similar expertise. Second, once these agencies were established in the East, natural lines of communication with parallel agencies in the *Reich* would facilitate coordination between domestic and external activities along functional lines. Finally, the division of responsibility followed Hitler's standard *modus operandi* of "divide and control" by ensuring no single agency or person acquired too much authority and power. While this organization made sense from one perspective, that of the bureaucrats in Berlin before the war, it produced disastrous results for the Army facing the monumental challenge of securing the occupied area and digging in for the long haul.

For example, Rosenberg's *Ostministerium*, the principal agency for effecting the political and governmental aspects of the occupation, was not officially established until 17 July 1941, four weeks after the invasion began. Between mid-July and 1 September 1941, the date *Reichskommissariat Ost und Ukraine* were activated, the staff had to be hastily assembled. The *Ostministerium*'s lofty responsibility was to "work out a blueprint for the organization of the long-term civilian administration in the occupied East."<sup>140</sup> Unfortunately, Rosenberg's administration was no *corps d'elite*, on the contrary, it was a "motley crew which owed only a nominal loyalty to their chief."<sup>141</sup> The majority of his staff comprised "personal enemies, obnoxious meddlers and incompetent chair warmers" expelled from their former jobs within the various civil ministries when the call came to supply civil servants for the East.<sup>142</sup> Some, with as little training as an introductory briefing, were rushed off to assume key positions in the occupation administration. To compound matters, the senior level leadership within the *Ostministerium* was largely comprised of long-time SA party members who harbored hostility to

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<sup>140</sup> Eric Waldman, *German Occupation Administration and Experience*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> Alan Clark, *Barbarossa, The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-45*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965) 59.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

both the Army and the SS. Overall, the Leadership Corps East (*Führerkorps Ost*) as it became known was a hopelessly incompetent group of malcontents, openly hostile to the Army, who were assigned the critical task of organizing functional governments in the occupied areas once control passed from the military zone of operations.

A different set of problems existed within the SS fiefdom in the East. Early in the Barbarossa planning effort, Himmler, through a series of machinations, secured an agreement from OKW making the SS the sole authority for police operations within the military zone of operations and the civilian administered areas. Furthermore, the SS chain of command for all forces in the East went directly to Himmler in Berlin regardless of the military situation or the *Ostministerium's* objectives. Under this exclusive chain of command, the SS and police operated across all boundaries and were free to interfere in any aspect of the occupation administration. Himmler's lieutenants, with his full support, consistently conspired to expand their authority at the expense of the military and the other civil agencies. Answerable to no authority in the theater, the SS committed its most outrageous actions without regard for the military-political situation. The SD's *Sonderkommando* and *Einsatzgruppen* operated throughout the occupied areas exterminating commissars, Jews and other non-desirables in the wake of Barbarossa. These acts of unrestrained, ideologically-driven violence directed at the civilian population was the single most powerful factor that galvanized popular support for the partisan movement early in the occupation and proved to be the biggest obstacle in later attempts by the Army to win over the Russian peoples' "hearts and minds."

Competing with the incompetence of the *Ostministerium* and the brutality of the SS were the economic agencies loosely confederated under Göring's "Four Year Plan." These agencies sole purpose was the economic exploitation of the occupied areas. The span of control for these disparate agencies was a maze of complexities. Suffice to say however, the chain of command by-passed both the Army and the *Ostministerium* in most cases. Additionally, a number of small agencies operated independently within the occupied areas that were not even under Göring's

control. Though not united in command, these agencies worked collectively in function to loot captured industry, foodstuffs, raw materials and slave labor for shipment back to the *Reich*. All of these actions were implemented, preceding the completion of Barbarossa, without regard for the potential effects on the military problem of securing the occupied areas following the conclusion of major combat operations.

In the period of transition following Operation Barbarossa, total “interagency” chaos severely hampered the Army’s ability to stabilize the occupied areas. In the towns and villages where the people had only days or weeks before welcomed the German Army as liberators, the *SS Einstazgruppen* arrived and began an indiscriminate slaughter of civilians that alienated the population and drove whole areas that were previously sympathetic, or at least neutral to the German occupation, into the partisan camp. In places where the Army had begun to organize local indigenous self-defense forces, economic boards arrived later to draft all able-bodied men, including those in the security force, for deportation to the *Reich* in the incessant quest for manpower for Germany’s armaments industry. For its part, the *Ostministerium* was completely ineffective in establishing functional governments and providing viable alternatives for the populace that was under continuous pressure from the underground communist party apparatus to support the partisan movement. These are but a few examples; Eric Waldman in “German Occupation Administration and Experience in the USSR” described the overall situation most concisely:

The division of responsibilities between a military and civilian administration and the great number of uncoordinated operating agencies decreased the effectiveness of military government at all levels and lessened cooperative action on the part of the Russian agencies. German organizational planning did not take account of the long period of military jurisdiction, during which the military should have initiated long-range political and economic programs, or the need for a flexible administration based on actual conditions.<sup>143</sup>

Why did this situation exist and what role did the Army play in its creation? Dating to the German National Defense Law of 1938, all executive authority for administration of occupied

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<sup>143</sup> Eric Waldman, *German Occupation Administration and Experience*, 3.

territories during the time of war was placed solely in the hands of the German Army. The National Defense Law of 1938 required that in times of crisis or war, total authority over military operations and the activities of all German civil agencies in the zone of operations would be transferred to the Commander in Chief of the Army, or his designated senior commander in the field (army, and subsequently army group commanders). The law stated that the power of decision in questions concerning occupation government in the zone of operations was vested exclusively in the Commander in Chief of the Army. Civil-military coordination at the strategic level was to be maintained by placing representatives of the *Reich's* technical ministries in the coordinating staffs at OKW and OKH- the Quartermaster Branch of the Operations Staff and Quartermaster General of the Army respectively. At the operational level, a "Chief of Civil Administration" and his staff was attached to the headquarters of armies and army groups. In summary, prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, in theory the Army was the single, unified authority empowered to make all decisions pertaining to military government, economic and logistical issues in the theater of operations and acted as the forcing function to ensure effective coordination and unity of purpose was maintained.

Between 1938 and the preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union however, that unity of purpose that formerly resided in the Commander in Chief and the Army commanders in the theater was eroded. In Poland, the precedence for the swift transfer of occupied territories from military to civil administration was established when the Army was relieved of responsibility in the occupied areas by the Government General headed by Dr. Hans Frank in less than eight weeks after the invasion. When Hitler turned his attention to the Soviet Union, he further weakened the Army's administrative responsibility, and thus weakened its authority, in the occupied areas. Hitler's reasons were twofold: (a) there wasn't enough force structure in the Army to divert combat power from the primary mission of destroying the Red Army to running the occupied areas and (b) he simply did not trust the Army's ideological conviction to implement

his long-range vision for Russia. Displaying unmatched indifference and shortsightedness, the Army welcomed relief from this responsibility.

When the German Army crossed the Soviet frontier in 1941, the planners anticipated the period of military administration would last less than three months.<sup>144</sup> The tasks for even this truncated period of military administration were not clearly defined. The only issue that was clear was that the Army would have no role in planning political policy. Later in the occupation, the Army was its own harshest critic regarding this failure:

It was believed that the country could be administered by German forces alone and also that it was unnecessary to issue a uniform directive for the treatment of the people and country. The result of this, however, was that all the numerous German organizations developed their own approaches depending on the tasks they were supposed to carry out. The directives coming from top-level offices differed greatly in their basic ideas. They oscillated between the principle of planned reconstruction and reasonable exploitation and the principle of economic exploitation of the country and the treatment of its inhabitants as subjects.<sup>145</sup>

In summary, it is impossible to describe with more clarity and succinctness the anarchy that characterized civil-military interaction in the occupied areas immediately following Barbarossa than the summary provided by the U.S. Operations Research Office who studied the problem in 1955:

The German military operation was adversely affected by factors under their own control. The absence of plans in some fields and the implementation of policies which deflected rather than attracted the population could have been avoided had the German high command recognized the Army Field Commander's inherent civil-military responsibilities. Originally, the German Army liked the arrangement of being relieved from political responsibilities in order to be able to concentrate on "non-political" military tasks. However, the military leaders found out that this arrangement also removed the military leaders from the policy-formulating process at the highest level. When the Army eventually had to administer large areas for prolonged periods of time, it was

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>145</sup> Based on an "experience report" prepared by Army Group A in 1944-45. Waldman, *German Occupation Administration and Experience*, 132.

bound by political and economic directives that were developed independently of military requirements and considerations.<sup>146</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The idea for this study began in the summer of 2004. At that time, the United States was beginning its second year of war in Iraq and a very perplexing situation faced the U.S. military. The major combat phase of OIF (18 March to 1 May 2003) was arguably one of the most successful examples of decisive battle in history and yet the U.S. was encountering great difficulty in securing its political aims after the collapse of the Iraqi regime and the Iraqi Army. The U.S. had beaten the Iraqi Army rapidly, decisively and with minimal loss of life and deposed Saddam Hussein's regime. However, the general state of social anarchy and the growing insurgency that emerged in the aftermath were obstructing U.S. efforts to install a new, stable regime supported by the majority of the Iraqi people. What had happened in the previous twelve months to explain this situation?

Answering this question with any degree of certainty proved problematic. It is most difficult to explain a complex event such as war as it unfolds and this certainly holds true for the U.S. involvement in Iraq. No definitive account has emerged to explain exactly what went wrong and what, if anything, could have been done differently in Iraq between May 2003 and the present. The question of whether or not OIF was planned and conducted in a manner that actually increased the obstacles to achieving the U.S. strategic aim in Iraq will only be answered by time. If the question as it relates to OIF can not be answered directly, then perhaps it would be useful to explore a similar phenomenon in a historical context.

A number of contemporary authors have made comparisons between the U.S. experience in Iraq to various historical examples such as the occupation of Germany and Japan or the counterinsurgency experience in Vietnam. But for the question posed by this study, neither of

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<sup>146</sup> Memorandum prepared by the Department of the Army, Operations and Personnel Research Division, 14 September, 1955. Memorandum is attached to Eric Waldman's *German Occupation Administration and Experience*.

these examples seemed to offer much insight. The German experience in the invasion of the Soviet Union however seemed to possess many similarities. Although the German Army did not destroy the Red Army, in the initial period of war the Red Army was driven from European Russia in a rapid, stunning operation and the communist regime was decapitated in the occupied areas. Despite this initial success in major combat operations however, by early 1942 a general social anarchy and a growing insurgency made the German occupation hopeless. Regardless of the outcome against the Red Army, there was simply no chance that a viable pro-German regime would emerge in the occupied areas.

The German struggle to secure the occupied areas and suppress the partisan movement in the wake of Operation Barbarossa illustrates the nature of the problem of bridging the gap between rapid, decisive combat operations and the business of regime change – securing populations and infrastructure and persuading people to accept the transition from a defeated government to a new one. In this regard, the German experience on the Eastern Front following Operation Barbarossa seems to offer a number of similarities to the U.S. experience in Iraq in the aftermath of OIF. In conclusion, this study highlights what may be some of the enduring qualities about the nature of the transition between decisive battle and political endstate – particularly when that endstate is regime change. Four key ideas stand out.

### **The Chimera of Decisive Battle**

It is important to consider the incompleteness of the linear, Newtonian paradigm of war. War is not simple kinetic problem. Perhaps decisive battle has never really been “decisive” in the modern era of warfare. This certainly holds true for Operation Barbarossa. Even though the German Army nearly destroyed the Red Army in a stunning attack and toppled the Stalinist regime in the occupied areas in the initial months of the campaign, this by itself was not enough to achieve Germany’s broader political aims of establishing new governments in the occupied areas. As Operation Barbarossa culminated and the Red Army regrouped beyond the operational



reach of the German Army, the Army was faced with the tasks of securing the population centers and key infrastructure and persuading the defeated populace to support a new government – each a monumental task in itself that the Barbarossa planners had simply not considered relevant during the planning process. The consequences of the Newtonian paradigm as it played out following Operation Barbarossa calls to mind the contemporary cliché that war is more than breaking things and killing people. At some point in every war, the focus must shift from destruction to the formation of the desired “new normal,” from the enemy’s military forces to ending the amorphous chaos and violence that follow major combat operations. As the German’s struggle with this problem in 1941-1942 demonstrate, it is clear that if these transitions are not thought out in advance, there’s little chance of properly planning and resourcing them under pressure.

By comparison, was “shock and awe” in OIF simply a rerun of the same linear, kinetic approach to war based on the same fallacies that characterized “blitzkrieg” in Operation Barbarossa? In many respects, the answer is yes. At the strategic level, the U.S. administration maintained a very Newtonian vision of warfare throughout the planning for OIF. According to Frederick Kagan, the U.S. President and the Secretary of Defense shared a vision for the war in Iraq that:

Focused on destroying the enemy’s armed forces and his ability to command them and control them. It did not focus on the problem of achieving political objectives. The advocates of a “new American way of war,” Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and (President) Bush chief among them, have attempted to simplify war into a targeting drill. They see the enemy as a target set and believe that when all or most of the targets have been hit, he will inevitably surrender and American goals will be achieved.<sup>147</sup>

A similar vision of war was held at the operational-level within the U.S. military. One senior U.S. commander observed in retrospect on the OIF plan: “We focused on the regime, and the Iraqi Army. They were in Baghdad, so we went to Baghdad to defeat the army and remove the regime. We believed everything else would be OK.” A senior planner in the same command had

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<sup>147</sup> Frederick Kagan, “War and Aftermath,” *Policy Review*, August/September 2004.

a similar perception: “in the eighteen months we planned and war-gamed OIF, we never addressed the post-hostilities phase of operations.”

## **Complex Adaptive Systems**

The notion of a complex adaptive system is an extremely useful mental model to explain the spontaneous organization of various threats in the chaotic, lawless vacuum of transition operations. These complex adaptive systems grow to compete for control of the future political shape of the post-conflict environment. In the Soviet Union, the brutality of the Nazi occupation authority explains why the partisan struggle emerged with such intensity, but there remains considerable disagreement over how the partisan movement came together and succeeded in the occupied territories. Two schools of thought have emerged to explain the phenomenon. The romantic notion holds that the entire movement, from start to finish, was a spontaneous popular resistance that randomly coalesced to save Mother Russia. The opposing *a priori* notion portrays the partisan movement as a well-coordinated insurgency planned and organized by the Soviet government well in advance of the German invasion. However, both schools are rather simplistic and quite incorrect explanations of the phenomenon.

The partisan movement was actually a complex entity consisting of many interacting agents. These multiple agents, acting together as the partisan system, co-evolved with German anti-partisan operations as they interacted in the environment of the occupied areas. This suggests that the partisan movement can best be described as a complex adaptive system – a concept borrowed from the field of complexity theory. Viewing the partisan movement from this perspective, it is easy to contrast its evolution with the German Army’s Newtonian approach to occupation and explain why the German approach failed.

The German Army approached the occupation of the Soviet Union from a linear cause and effect approach. In contrast to nonlinearity within complexity theory, linearity is “the

cornerstone of the Newtonian paradigm.”<sup>148</sup> It “offers structural stability and emphasis on equilibrium; it legitimates simple extrapolations of known developments, scaling and compartmentalization; and it promises prediction and thus control.”<sup>149</sup> Based on this definition, Barbarossa was linear in the extreme. Its expected outcome was linear to the point of being formulaic: A, the destruction of the Red Army, plus B, the collapse of the Soviet regime in Moscow, equals C, the collapse of the Soviet people’s will to resist in the occupied areas. The emergence of the partisan resistance on the other hand was completely nonlinear. It evolved in “a mix of threat and opportunity, instabilities, discontinuities, synergisms and unpredictability.”<sup>150</sup> By necessity, it was “flexible, adaptable, dynamic and responsive.”<sup>151</sup> As these definitions indicate, the partisan movement’s organizational complexity and evolving functionality closely resembles the classification of a complex adaptive system.

A complex adaptive system has several defining characteristics, five of which are germane to both the partisan resistance in the wake of Barbarossa and the insurgency in the wake of OIF. First, a complex adaptive system is composed of a large number of interacting parts or agents (complexity). Second, the ways in which these agents connect and relate to one another is critical to the survival of the system (connectivity). Third, there is no visible hierarchy of command and control, planning or managing, only a constant reorganization to find the best fit with the environment (self-organizing). Fourth, rather than being planned or controlled, the agents in the system interact in apparently random ways. As the system’s components interact with their environment, these interactions inform the agents within the system and the behavior of the system itself (emergence). Finally, small changes in the initial condition of the system have significant effects after they pass through the emergence-feedback loop (iteration).

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<sup>148</sup> Alberts and Czerwinski (eds.) No page number indicated in online version, cited from [<http://www.ndu.edu>].

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

The Barbarossa plan assumed a linear, kinetic approach would suffice to secure the occupied areas. Major combat operations would quickly destroy the Red Army, causing the collapse of the Soviet central government in Moscow. Once this event occurred, resistance to the occupation would collapse without the command, control and intimidation that radiated out from the Party and the State in Moscow. In reality, as the Red Army retreated, the German security divisions were not robust or flexible enough to exert positive influence over the occupied areas. As a result, a niche was created that was exploited by the nascent partisan movement. The movement was comprised of various agents (the Communist Party, the Red Army, the NKVD, local civil support, and by-passed individual soldiers). The partisan movement's self-organization was largely unnoticed by the German Army. As the war progressed, the movement transitioned from a decentralized collection of disparate, localized groups to emerge as a centrally controlled, operational-level organization with campaign capabilities.

In Iraq, the complex adaptive system model also seems to provide the best explanation for the insurgent movement that arose in the aftermath of OIF. The rapid destruction of Iraq's conventional military forces and the abrupt, total collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime created a vacuum which allowed former regime elements and other anti-occupation groups the opportunity to launch attacks on U.S. forces and reconstruction targets. The insurgency appears to be composed of a large number of interacting parts (former *Ba'athist* regime operatives, sympathetic Sunni Arabs, including disbanded Iraqi military officers and soldiers, *al-Qaeda* and other Islamist suicide bombers, hired gunmen and militant anti-American *Shi'ites*). The ways in which these agents connect and relate to one another is critical to the survival of the insurgency (*Ba'athists* and Islamists may also be working to establish a level of operational cooperation that makes both groups more effective in opposing the coalition and the Iraqi government). Rather than being planned or controlled, the insurgents interact in apparently random ways (the leadership of the insurgency remains unclear and they have no apparent unifying ideology, strategy, or vision of a future Iraq; their operations appear decentralized and uncoordinated). Finally, the insurgency

appears to have an emergent quality in form and modus operandi (in the early stages of the insurgency, the most important and dangerous actors were clearly former *Ba'athist* regime elements apparently fighting to restore some semblance of the old regime, now however, the insurgents identity appears to be changing as anti-American Islamic militants join in the fight). In this regard, both the Soviet partisan movement and the Iraqi insurgency could accurately be described as complex adaptive systems – a useful mental model to describe the potential threats that must be countered when planning future transition operations.

### **The Role of Indigenous Security Forces**

In the transition phase of any campaign designed to affect regime change, the means available to achieve the key objectives associated with that aim (securing the population and the key infrastructure and persuading the subjugated people to accept the new regime) is limited to three options. The first is to convert your own force, in-stride, from a high-end warfighting organization to a mid-range security force. The second is to persuade some external force, private or international, to assume responsibility for that task. And finally, the third option is to incorporate into the campaign plan deliberate actions to recruit, organize and employ indigenous security forces.

Each option obviously has its own strengths, weaknesses and potential unintended consequences. The first option, converting your own “hammer to a scalpel” has no significant advantages and potentially disastrous consequences. The carefully created striking force, perhaps required for operations in other vital areas, is committed to an opened-ended mission that strategically fixes the force and erodes its combat power. Additionally, as history indicates, a victorious army that becomes an occupying force breeds contempt through proximity among the subjugated population and de-legitimizes the new regime. The second option, relying on an external party that is willing to commit a capable force to execute the victorious army’s dirty work such as the auxiliaries of the Roman legions is simply wishful thinking. Moreover, modern

attempts at international peacekeeping such as those forces sponsored by the United Nations, unless backed by the U.S., have generally proven ineffective, costly and often at odds with the intended political endstate. The last option, indigenous security forces, have great potential with very little downside.<sup>152</sup>

Second Panzer Army's employment of the Kaminsky Brigade in the Lokot region in 1942 represented the German Army's most successful line of operations against the partisan movement in the entire war. The Kaminsky Brigade achieved greater success against the partisans than any of Germany's security divisions at a cost of a handful of advisors and a small amount of military equipment. Furthermore, Kaminsky was able to carry out exceedingly repressive security measures that were actually welcomed by the local populace because his unit was providing for the people's immediate security needs – an accomplishment that eluded most German units in nearly every instance. Had the German Army been able to overcome the Nazi ideological intransigence regarding indigenous forces and expanded these types of operations throughout the entirety of the occupied areas, the German Army could have plausibly carried on the fight against the Red Army from a secure base of operations in the occupied areas.

The level of success the U.S. military has achieved with indigenous security forces in Iraq is unclear at the time of this writing. The most promising operations appear to be in the northern third of the country where U.S. Special Operations Forces have operated in conjunction with Kurdish security forces since the beginning of the war.<sup>153</sup> However, the real challenge is in the Sunni dominated area of the country. Unfortunately, it took almost eighteen months for the U.S. to realize that the main effort in Iraq was not hunting former regime loyalists but standing-up

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<sup>152</sup> It is of great importance of just how *indigenous* these forces must be to be successful. As was the case with the Kaminsky Brigade, the indigenous force must be truly native. Even better, a credible fighting force that existed before the introduction of foreign forces is the optimal solution. It is unlikely that the Kaminsky Brigade would have been as successful in the Lokot region if it was established by the German's after their arrival and did not retain a high degree of autonomy. Kaminsky was successful in large part for the very reason that he was not perceived as too closely allied with the German Army.

<sup>153</sup> It appears that the most successful Iraqi indigenous forces, particularly the Kurdish units, are those that share many of the same characteristics with the Kaminsky Brigade: a proven record before the introduction of the foreign force, relative autonomy and an untainted native character.

the Iraqi Army and police forces. There is no evidence that any consideration was given during the planning for OIF to rapidly establishing indigenous security forces to stabilize the country in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. One senior U.S. commander stated: "after we got to Baghdad, we didn't know who we would turn the country over to, we just assumed that some yet-to-be-named multinational headquarters would assume command of the stability and reconstruction phase of operations." Without a doubt, the most disastrous decisions made in the entire campaign was the decision to disband the entire Iraqi Army and in doing so losing the most promising chance to immediately establish an indigenous security force. In this regard, Operation Barbarossa and OIF have a great deal in common.

### **Doctrine, Culture and Interagency Coordination**

Finally, the three greatest factors that adversely influenced the German Army's planning for the transition following Operation Barbarossa were the decisive battle doctrinal and experiential fallacies, a defective cultural appreciation of the Soviet Union, and an indifference to the importance of civil-military unity of purpose. Doctrinally, the German Army was fixated on a conceptualization of warfare that simply concluded with the rapid destruction of the enemy army in a battle of annihilation. Regarding its cultural appreciation of the Soviet people, the German Army was completely negligent. The Army completely missed the opportunities inherent in the disaffection of huge segments of the population as a result of collectivization and religious suppression. Clearly, the potential existed to secure the occupied areas under the authority of an anti-Stalinist, popularly supported Russian Liberation Movement along the lines of that suggested by A.A. Vlasov. Conversely, the Army missed the historical warnings evident from the War of 1812 to the Russian Civil War that the Russian people possessed a collective conscious regarding partisan warfare and the fact that in the twenty plus years since the Bolshevik Revolution, a resilient and ruthless communist party apparatus had extended well beyond Moscow. Finally, the Army maintained an obtuse indifference to the relationship between the military instrument of

power and the role of the *Reich's* inept and competing civil agencies in the wake of Operation Barbarossa.

How did these issues play out in the U.S. military's planning for OIF? Regarding the issue of cultural appreciation, it must be said that the U.S. military placed far greater emphasis on Iraqi culture in the planning effort for OIF than was the case for the German Army in Operation Barbarossa. But in the areas of doctrinal conceptualization and interagency coordination, there are many parallels. Clearly, since the Vietnam era, the U.S. military was fixated on rapid, decisive operations, and ironically, its doctrine inspired by the successes of the German Army in World War II. Despite its experience in peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War 1990s, the U.S. military simply had not devoted a great deal of intellectual energy developing the integrated concepts necessary to bridge the gap between rapid, decisive combat operations and a complex political aim such as regime change. On the subject of interagency cooperation and civil-military unity of purpose, the chaos that characterized transition operations following the major combat phase of OIF with the introduction of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and subsequently, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), was on par with the German disaster in the occupied areas.

In summary, both campaigns suggest that these three facets are integral components of planning transition operations: (a) planning must be supported by a coherent doctrinal concept that links the temporal centers of gravity between major combat operations and transition operations to achieve the broader political aim, (b) the plan must be sufficiently informed by a cultural, political and social understanding of the targeted people in order to maximize opportunities and neutralize potential threats during the transition to the new order and (c) significant attention must be focused on integrating the military instrument of power with interagency operations to maintain civil-military unity of purpose.



## APPENDIX A: NOTES ON SOURCES

This study was conducted using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources on the strategy and conduct of the partisan war are limited. German participants were obviously reluctant to commit their experiences to official record after the war. Complicating the matter, German Army and *Waffen* SS reports and administrative records on anti-partisan operations were collected and maintained by the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD- the SS Security Service) and were intentionally destroyed in the last months of the war or captured by the Red Army. As a result, a comprehensive collection of primary sources, at least those translated and published in English, are not readily accessible. One primary source that proved invaluable, especially in the area of German and Soviet cultural perceptions, was the memoir of Captain Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, *Against Stalin and Hitler, 1941-1945*. Strik-Strikfeldt's memoir based on his experience with Russian General A.A. Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement is a powerfully persuasive testament to both the absurdity of the German occupation policy and "what might have been" had the German Army understood and exploited the ready cooperation of the Russian population following the initial invasion.

Similar problems exist with the availability of complete, uncensored primary sources covering the Soviet partisan strategy and operational history. Most Soviet records remain classified and those that are accessible are either politically tainted or are located only in Russian state and military archives. There are rare examples of primary accounts of Soviet partisan operations that have been declassified and reproduced in English such as *First Partisan Division* compiled by N.F. Yudin. *First Partisan Division* is based on a collection of memoirs, diaries, letters and photos that provide veterans' accounts of combat in the First Smolensk Partisan Division. Overall though, Soviet primary sources are limited as well.

To overcome this problem, this study uses an alternative approach to examine the actual participants' testimony and operational records of the partisan war. The U.S. took an immense interest in the German experience on the Eastern Front immediately after the war in an effort to

counter the growing Soviet threat. The Historical Division of the U.S. Army's European Command collected over 2,500 manuscripts from interrogations and interviews of former German officers between 1945 and 1961. Two hundred and thirteen reports from this collection were published in the *World War II German Military Studies*. While the German officer's recollections were certainly subject to bias, the U.S. undertook a great effort to document an accurate historical account of the war on the Eastern Front. A number of these reports focused specifically on the partisan war and were useful to this study. These include General Alexander Radcliffe's "Lessons Learned from the Partisan War in Russia," General Alfred Toppe, et al. "German Military Government," H.W. Posdnjakoff's "German Counterintelligence in Occupied Soviet Union," and General Franz Halder's "National Instinct and the Attempt to Build Governmental Institutions under German Occupation in the Western Oblasts of Russia."

The Human Resources Research Institute's (HRRI) "War Documentation Project," a research program sponsored by the Departments of State, the Army and the Navy, also contains primary source material and examines the operational lessons learned from the war in the East. Project "Alexander," a code name for studies on selected aspects of Soviet partisan warfare, began in 1951. The project used captured German and Soviet documents to prepare strategic intelligence estimates on Soviet society and psychological warfare plans in the case of war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Project Alexander produced several case studies on the Soviet partisan movement and German anti-partisan operations that proved useful to this study. These include "The Kaminsky Brigade, 1941-44- A Case Study of German Military Exploitation of Soviet Disaffection," "Soviet Partisan Movement in the North Caucasus, 1942-1943," "Partisan Psychological Warfare and Popular Attitudes under the German Occupation," and "Reactions to the German Occupation of Soviet Russia." Similar in scope and purpose of the Alexander Project are the studies conducted by the Operations Research Office at Johns Hopkins University and its successor the Rand Corporation. The most useful of these studies for this monograph are Eric Waldman's *German Occupation Administration and Experience in the*

*USSR, and German Use of Indigenous Auxiliary Police in the Occupied USSR*, and Alexander Alexiev's *Soviet Nationalities in German Wartime Strategy, 1941-1945*.<sup>154</sup>

The secondary sources used in this study general fall into three categories. The first are those traditional campaign, battle and organizational histories that help frame the planning for the German invasion in the context of the broader struggle on the Eastern Front. The most comprehensive include John Erickson's *The Road to Stalingrad*, David Glantz and Jonathan House's *When Titans Clashed*, Alan Clark's *Barbarossa*, Bryan Fugate's *Operation Barbarossa*, Earl Ziemke and Magna Bauer's *Moscow to Stalingrad: Decision in the East*, Matthew Cooper's *The German Army, 1939-1945* and Geoffrey Megargee's *Inside Hitler's High Command*.

The second category is comprised of those studies that specifically address the German occupation policy and anti-partisan operations as well as the Soviet partisan movement. The most scholarly of these works from the German perspective include Matthew Cooper's *The Nazi War Against Soviet Partisans*, Alexander Dallin's *German Rule in Russia*, Colin Heaton's *German Anti-Partisan Warfare in Europe*, Theo Schulte's *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia*, and Charles von Luttichau's *Guerilla and Counter-guerilla Warfare in Russia during World War II*. The best sources that focus on the Soviet partisan movement include John Armstrong's (editor) *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, Leonid Grenkevic's *The Soviet Partisan Movement*, and Edgar Howell's *The Soviet Partisan Movement* (Center for Military History Publication 104-19). Although dated, a number of dissertations and articles from scholarly journals also provide excellent analysis on selected subjects pertinent to this study including Alexander Pronin's "Guerilla Warfare in the German Occupied Soviet Territories,"

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<sup>154</sup> The best account of the severity of the anarchic interaction between the Army and Germany's civil agencies operation in the occupied areas was produced by a number of senior German officials from the East following their expulsion from Soviet soil by the Red Army in 1944-1945. These observations form the framework for Eric Waldman's *German Occupation Administration and Experience in the USSR*. Ironically, the German Army's purpose for consolidating this assessment of civil-military relations in the occupied areas was to better prepare for the second attempt at occupying the Soviet Union. Their conclusions on the German experience in "interagency" operations and its consequences should be required reading for military planners.

Keith Simpson's "German Experiences of Rear Area Security on the Eastern Front," and Ernst von Dohnányi's "Combating Soviet Guerillas."

Finally, a number of general works on various topics including insurgencies, counterinsurgency operations, current U.S. doctrine, future joint operating concepts and general systems and complexity theory were used to examine lessons learned from the Eastern Front in a modern context. These include Ian Beckett's *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750*, Bard O'Neil's *Insurgency and Terrorism, Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Jeffery Record and W. Andrew Terrill's "Iraq and Vietnam: Differences, Similarities and Insights," the U.S. Army's *FM 3-07.22: Counterinsurgency Operations* (draft) and the *Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept* published by the U.S. Joint Forces Command and finally, Mitchell Waldrop's *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* and the National Defense University's *Complexity, Global Politics and National Security* (David Alberts and Thomas Czerwinski (eds.)).

## APPENDIX B: KEY PERSONS OF INTEREST IN THE STUDY

**Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch.** Commander in Chief of the Army, (4 February 1938 to 19 December 1941).

**General Franz Halder.** Chief of Staff, OKH (1 November 1938 to 24 September 1942). After frequent disagreements with Hitler, he was dismissed in September 1942.

**Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel.** Chief of Staff, OKW (4 February 1938 to 8 May 1945).

**Colonel Eberhard Kinzel.** Chief of the Foreign Armies East Branch (*Fremde Heere Ost*) of the General Staff's Intelligent Department (26 August 1939 to 1 May 1942).

**Colonel Bernhard von Lossberg.** Lossberg's OKW study of a potential campaign in the Soviet Union was thirty pages long and code-named "Fritz," after his son. Lossberg's study was similar in overall concept to the OKH plan for Operation Barbarossa that was executed in the summer of 1941.

**Lieutenant General Erich Marcks.** Chief of Staff, 18<sup>th</sup> Army (5 November 1939 to 10 December 1940). Based on his position as the Chief of Staff of the German 18<sup>th</sup> Army, which was stationed in East Prussia and Poland following the occupation of Poland, Marcks was selected to head the OKH planning effort from its inception in July 1940 until he presented “Operational Draft East” in August 1940.

**General Friedrich von Paulus.** Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, OKH (3 September 1940 to 16 January 1942). Paulus was the principal officer at OKH responsible for all operational aspects of the Barbarossa campaign plan for throughout the majority of its development. Subsequently appointed Commanding General of the German Sixth Army on 16 January 1942 and captured by the Red Army at Stalingrad on 1 February 1943.

**Alfred Rosenberg.** Germany’s Minister of the East European Region (*Ostministerium*). Rosenberg was born to ethnic German parents in Russia in 1893. He received a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Moscow, fought for the counter-revolutionaries in the Russian Civil War and migrated to Germany in 1918 and immediately joined the National Socialist German Workers Party. Rosenberg served as the leader of the Nazi party during Hitler’s imprisonment following the failed Beer Hall Putsch. Rosenberg was a long-time Nazi ideologue and considered the architect of key Nazi racial and foreign policy.

**General Georg Thomas.** Chief of OKW’s Economic Staff for the East (*Wirtschaftsstab Ost*), (1 September 1939 to 1 August 1940).

## **APPENDIX C: KEY TERMS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**Army General Staff (*Generalstab des Heeres*).** One of the five main subordinate elements of the OKH staff. The General Staff planned and directed all Army operations and as a result of this key function, the General Staff largely wielded the authority to direct the activities of OKH’s other staff elements.

**German occupation government (*Kriegsverwaltung*).** The government, military or civil, of those territories and countries not belonging to the German Reich, which were occupied during the war.<sup>155</sup>

**German military government (*Militärverwaltung*).** That part of the occupation government administered by the German Army.<sup>156</sup>

**German high command.** A nonspecific term used throughout this study meaning the collective leadership of Germany's national command authority primarily consisting of Hitler, his key civil advisers, the senior chiefs of the armed services and the staffs of OKW and OKH.

**High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, or OKW).** Created in 1938 and headed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, OKW answered directly to Hitler and was responsible for issuing broad directives to the military services that would provide strategic and operational guidance for large-scale actions.

**High Command of the Army (*Oberkommando des Heeres*, or OKH).** Created in 1920 and headed by General Franz Halder from 1938 to 1942, OKH answered to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and was responsible for operational planning for land warfare and all other activities concerning the Army.

**Partisan.** "An irregular force, politically motivated into paramilitary action against an armed external aggressor, imbued with limited military or paramilitary capabilities and dedicated to waging unconventional warfare through small localized units on an individual as well as collective basis."<sup>157</sup> Current U.S. joint military doctrine prohibits the use of the term "partisan warfare" and instead prescribes the use of "guerilla warfare" in its place.<sup>158</sup> The term partisan conjures up the notion of a popular, legitimate combatant fighting to expel an invader from his sovereign national territory; hence the prohibition against using the term in relation to U.S.

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<sup>155</sup> P-033 German Military Government, 16.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Heaton, 18.

<sup>158</sup> JP 1-02: *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 5 June 2003), 227.

operations for obvious political purposes.<sup>159</sup> However, the term has been used historically to describe the Soviet movement and those Soviet combatants engaged in irregular paramilitary warfare against the German Army on the Eastern Front. “Partisan” is therefore used in that context throughout this study.

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<sup>159</sup> The U.S. military obviously prefers its operations against unconventional combatants to be perceived as operations against guerrillas, insurgents, criminals, terrorists, etc., not partisans defending their country against an external invader.

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